OBAMA'S FIRST 100 DAYS • CHRISTOPHER HAYES

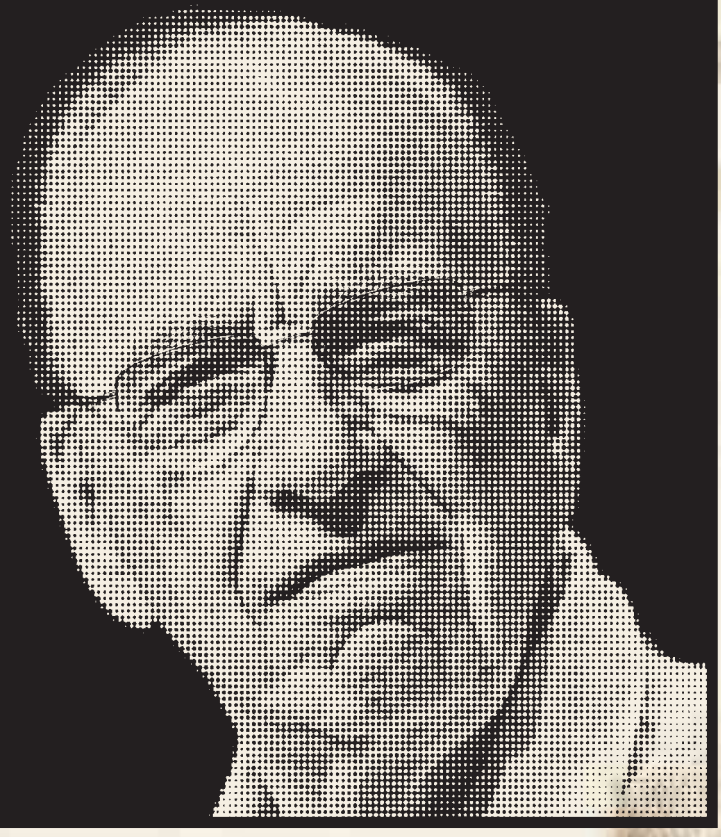
THE NATION

'JOURNAL' LOST ITS SOUL?

Fear stalks hallways of Murdoch's Wall St. sheet

SCOTT SHERMAN

MAY 11, 2009
TheNation.com



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Letters

Newspapers: Dinosaur or Phoenix?

John Nichols and Robert W. McChesney's April 6 "The Death and Life of Great American Newspapers" drew much mail, expressing an array of opinions. Readers thought the article "wonderful," "insightful," "sad, frightening and deeply important." Many agreed that newspapers must be saved for the health of our democracy. But there was also a "let them die" crowd: "by the time I remove the advertising, fliers and useless information from my newspaper, there's nothing. I'm tired of being left with stacks of recycling"; "the death of newspapers will save our forests and reduce global warming"; "why should we [subsidize] papers that feed us only what the wealthy want us to see?" One reader suggests we should just say, "Ave atque vale." *—The Editors*

Dummerston, Vt.

Your cover story is the most important I've read in years. Anyone concerned with the future of democracy should heed its call. A minor quibble: the authors say they are enthusiastic about Wikipedia. The *New York Times* has revealed that Wal-Mart and ExxonMobil had a field day manipulating Wikipedia articles about themselves. In an article in the Pulitzer Prize–winning (and endangered) *Rutland Herald*, I showed how the industry turned a Wikipedia nuclear power article into a PR piece. For information on an effort to keep high-quality local journalism alive in northwestern New England, go to eeshawilliams.blogspot.com.

Eesha Williams

Saxtons River, Vt.

As a journalist and freelance writer, I know all too well about the crisis in journalism. I have seen the demise of so many publications for which I once wrote (some cited by the authors), I've stopped counting them. A newspaper for which I've been a regular columnist for eight years recently informed me that it could no longer pay me. I am now donating my work there because I have a lot to say and a following that likes me to say it. One paper has just informed its columnists that we are being cut by three monthly columns a year.

As a lecturer in sociology and ethics, I work hard to instill in my students an understanding of the critical role sound independent journalism plays in a democracy. I'm not sure they—iPods and cellphones in hand—get it; they are certainly not reading newspapers or magazines regularly.

So I like some of the suggestions offered by Nichols and McChesney with regard to engaging youth in the Fourth Estate. At the same time, I doubt there will be much public enthusiasm for government intervention or "bailouts" to the tune of $60 billion over three years. Nonetheless, I hope the article makes its way into the hands of folks on Capitol Hill. At least some of them will be interested in the notion of a "free press 'infrastructure project'" in the interest of "an informed citizenry, and democracy itself."

Elayne Clift

Des Moines

I find myself in a dilemma. Though I am in the demographic that is gaga over the Internet, I am less than enthused with the content and the delivery mechanism. Sitting in a comfortable chair with a bendable print copy in my hands that does not pop advertisements directly into my face is much more desirable than what's on my computer. Nevertheless, I do receive most of my news on the Net. My dilemma, though, is an economic one. I feel it is more of a necessity to have the Internet than it is for me to subscribe to my favorite newspapers and magazines. Were I to lose my job, I would be in a much better position to get a new one using the Internet than a newspaper. I have a limited income, so my only choice seems to be to stick with the Internet (and the added benefits of e-mail, etc.), rather than pay for newspapers. I hate to think I am contributing to the demise of good journalism. I know it is probably too late to overhaul this behemoth, but there has to be a better way.

Jill Sweeney

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(continued on page 24)

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Accountability for Torture

The release of memorandums prepared by Bush administration lawyers on how—not *if*, but *how*—to torture prisoners confronts Congress with the sort of constitutional challenge its risk-averse members have a penchant for ducking. Over the past thirty-five years, the branch of government best positioned to curb abuses of executive power has repeatedly skipped opportunities to check and balance an increasingly imperial presidency. Just one month after Richard Nixon resigned in disgrace, when President Gerald Ford pardoned his predecessor, Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield and several members of the House Judiciary Committee suggested that the impeachment process could be reopened. But House Democratic leaders, fearing that the move would harm the party's 1974 electoral prospects, stymied the initiative. California Congressman John Moss, a champion of open government, later complained, "The House should have completed its impeachment action. We were less than we should have been."

COMMENT

On the matter of presidential accountability, the House has been less than it should be ever since. The chamber that refused to hold Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and their henchmen to account for Iran/Contra abuses—and that took impeachment "off the table" even after revelations that George W. Bush and Dick Cheney had committed acts that former White House legal counsel John Dean identified as "worse than Watergate"—has remained a bystander as successive presidents have engaged in ever more sinister abuses of authority.

Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Constitution subcommittee, who has long urged Congress to get more serious about checking and balancing executive excess, is now rightly arguing that evidence of the Bush administration's complicity in torture must be addressed. "Horrible abuses were committed in the name of the American people, and we cannot look the other way or just 'move on,'" he says. But Congress must also confront its own complicity: members must recognize that their repeated refusals to address abuses by sitting and former presidents have facilitated a breakdown in the constitutional order.

This recognition must be joined with Congressional action to remove those who sanctioned and promoted torture from positions of public trust and, if inquiries so conclude, to hold Bush, Cheney and their top aides to account. Going after Jay Bybee, the former assistant attorney general who wrote the most noxious memo—outlining schemes for waterboarding, sleep deprivation, slamming prisoners against walls and putting them in "confinement boxes" with insects—would be a swift and aggressive opening gambit. Bybee is now a judge in the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit; he should be impeached by the House and removed from office by the Senate.

There are other routes to accountability. New York's Jerrold Nadler, who chairs the House subcommittee on the Constitution, proposes appointing a special counsel. As Center for Constitutional Rights president Michael Ratner explains, "Some claim that to prosecute those who approved torture techniques would criminalize a policy difference. But torture is against the law." He goes on to say, "The claim that the administration officials who promoted the use of waterboarding… were acting in the national interest does not absolve them; if it did, all torturers the world over would use the same justifications." And President Obama, who erred

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Slide Shows: Obama @ 100

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The Archivist: FDR's WPA

on the side of the transparency demanded by the American Civil Liberties Union in its long campaign to obtain the memos, gets points for ordering an end to the use of the torture techniques they outlined and for expressing at least a measure of openness to a "further accounting" and perhaps prosecution of wrongdoers. But Obama's fretting about inquiries "getting so politicized" and suggesting a preference for shifting responsibility to a bipartisan independent commission are unsettling.

As a former constitutional law lecturer, Obama should have a firmer grasp of the point of executive accountability. It is not merely to "lay blame," as he suggests; it is to set boundaries on presidential behavior and to clarify where wrongdoing will be challenged. Presidents, even those who profess honorable intentions, do not get to write their own rules. Congress must set and enforce those boundaries. When Obama suggested that CIA personnel who acted on the legal advice of the Bush administration would not face "retribution," Illinois's Jan Schakowsky, chair of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's subcommittee on oversight and investigations, offered the only appropriate response. "I don't want to compare this to Nazi Germany, but we've come to almost ridicule the notion that when horrific acts have been committed that people can use the excuse that, Well, I was just following orders," explained Schakowsky, who has instructed aides to prepare for a torture inquiry. "There should be an open mind of what to do with information that we get from thorough investigations," she added.

There must also be a proper framework for investigations. Gathering information for the purpose of creating a permanent record is only slightly superior to Obama's banalities about wanting to "move forward." Truth commissions that grant immunity to wrongdoers and bipartisan commissions that negotiate their way to redacted reports do not check and balance the executive branch any more than "warnings" punish speeding motorists.

Impeaching Bybee, as recommended by Nadler and Common Cause, would send the right signal. But it cannot be the only one. The House Judiciary Committee should examine all available avenues for achieving accountability—including the prospect of formal action against former officeholders, up to and including the sort of impeachments imagined by Mansfield and his compatriots in 1974. And Nadler and Feingold should use their subcommittees to begin outlining statutory constraints on the executive branch. The point, again, is not merely to address Bush/Cheney-era crimes but also to dial down the imperial presidency that has evolved under the unwatchful eye of successive Congresses.

"Congress…must be vigilant to the perils of the subversive notion that any public official, the president or a policeman, possesses a kind of inherent power to set the Constitution aside whenever he thinks the public interest or 'national security' warrants it. That notion is the essential postulate of tyranny," California Congressman Don Edwards warned thirty-five years ago, when too many of his colleagues thought Nixon's resignation had caged the beast of executive aggrandizement. That vigilance, too long delayed, is the essential duty of every member of Congress who swears an oath to support and defend the Constitution.

JOHN NICHOLS

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Noted.

THE WIRE: Could it be more embarrassing? **Jane Harman**, the hawkish, pro-Israel California Democrat, tells a suspected Israeli spy that she'll do what she can to quash an espionage trial for two former officials of the **American Israel Public Affairs Committee** (AIPAC) and then ends the conversation with the *24*-ish: "This conversation doesn't exist." But it does. And it's been caught on tape by a court-sanctioned, legal **FBI** wiretap that got leaked to and published by *Congressional Quarterly*'s **Jeff Stein**. Oops.

About four years ago, the FBI and the Justice Department began investigating Harman. The charge? That she'd told AIPAC she would help kill the indictment of the ex-AIPAC officials, **Steve Rosen** and **Keith Weissman**, if AIPAC would help her get appointed as chair of the House Intelligence Committee.

According to Stein, the FBI investigation of Harman was halted by none other than **Alberto Gonzales**, who did Harman a favor in order to secure her support for the illegal, warrantless NSA surveillance program. In particular, Gonzales wanted Harman to help suppress a *New York Times* report on the program. Harman denies any wrongdoing, and exactly what she did—whether she intervened with the Justice Department on behalf of Rosen and Weissman, whether she talked to the Bush White House, and what she did vis-à-vis the *Times* on behalf of Gonzales—is murky, though the *Times* does report that she called the paper's Washington bureau chief and urged him not to run the story. Mixed up in all of it is **Haim Saban**, the billionaire mogul and Democratic funder, who reportedly lobbied Harman to kill the AIPAC investigation.

It's messy, and like anything involving the Israel lobby, politicians don't want to touch it with a ten-foot pole. But the whole thing—Harman, Saban, AIPAC, Rosen and Weissman, Gonzales, etc.—needs a thorough investigation. ROBERT DREYFUSS

HUGO'S BOOK CLUB: The jury may be out on Chavismo as a political ideology, but there can be no doubt of **Hugo Chávez**'s salutary impact on the beleaguered world of book publishing. After the Venezuelan president gifted **Barack Obama** with a copy of **Eduardo Galeano**'s *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*, the book, first published in 1971, shot up to No. 2 on **Amazon**'s bestseller list. In 2006, Chávez mentioned **Noam Chomsky**'s *Hegemony or Survival* in a speech at the United Nations, promptly sending Chomsky to Amazon's top spot. **Nation Books** is publishing Galeano's *Mirrors: Stories of Almost Everyone* in June—a month in which UN Secretary General **Ban Ki-moon** celebrates a birthday (hint, hint).

HELP THE PRESSES! The cover story **John Nichols** and **Robert W. McChesney** penned for the April 6 issue of *The Nation*, "The Death and Life of Great American Newspapers," continues to stir remarkable reaction. On April 21, Nichols testified before the **House Judiciary Committee**'s subcommittee on competition, telling members, "You cannot have democracy without journalism" and urging Congress to consider policies that would encourage ownership models that keep newsrooms open and journalists working in communities across the country.

WALTER SCHNEIR: Over the years, **Walter Schneir**, who died on April 11, wrote, or co-wrote with his wife and collaborator, Miriam, about a dozen articles for *The Nation*. Whether he was writing about the quantity of strontium-90 in the bones of American children, the Rosenberg-Sobell case, how the military cooked the books as revealed in the Westmoreland case, the memoirs of a Soviet spymaster or the **Venona Project**, his articles and reviews had the following elements in common: they were informed by a fierce passion for social justice; they were written in identification with the underdog; they exhibited a keen attachment to the importance of civil liberty; they fearlessly questioned the conventional wisdom and took on the powers that be; but perhaps most important, they followed the evidence wherever it led and, almost alone among the ideologically embattled, admitted it when they got something wrong.

The Schneirs made history thirty-six years ago with the publication of *Invitation to an Inquest*, which concluded that the Rosenbergs were unjustly convicted. When subsequent research in Prague with members of the Czech secret police, interviews with various Soviet intelligence agents and with accused participants in a Rosenberg spy ring—not to mention a scrupulous reading of the Venona intercepts—persuaded Walter and Miriam that **Julius Rosenberg** ran a non-atomic spy ring, they said so in these very pages ("Cryptic Answers," August 14/21, 1995), without withdrawing their original conclusion.

"We know that our account will be painful news for many people, as it is for us," they wrote. "But the duty of a writer is to tell the truth." The death of Walter Schneir is painful news, but we salute his life and celebrate his example. VICTOR NAVASKY

GAY OLD PARTY? The great political story of the next few years will be that of the evolving Republican Party. Will it retreat into the camp of the religious fundamentalists? Or will it emerge into the sunlight of the twenty-first century and err on the libertarian side of **Barry Goldwater** conservatism? The man who managed **John McCain**'s presidential campaign, **Steve Schmidt**, opts for the latter route.

Speaking April 17 to the **Log Cabin Republicans**, a gay and lesbian group, Schmidt said, "There is a sound conservative argument to be made for same-sex marriage. I believe conservatives, more than liberals, insist that rights come with responsibilities. No other exercise of one's liberty comes with greater responsibilities than marriage.... I cannot in good conscience exclude anyone who is prepared for such a commitment from the prospect of such happiness."

This wasn't just an opinion. It was political advice to a party that Schmidt, a key player in the campaigns of California Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, warns is "shrinking and losing ground" as more and more Americans come to see it as a "religious party." Schmidt's counsel: "If you put public policy issues to a religious test, you risk becoming a religious party, and in a free country, a political party cannot remain viable in the long term if it is seen as sectarian." JOHN NICHOLS

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Notes on Change

100 DAYS

"But I don't understand. He has a mandate."

I'm at a cocktail party (they really do have a lot of them in this town) talking to a woman who's frustrated. I've had this conversation dozens of times. She fears history repeating itself.

"With Clinton we could see it coming. I mean, he was from Arkansas—all you had to do was look at the record in that state. But Obama came in with a real mandate. He didn't have to put all the same people in."

At first I say, "Well, it's not really Obama; it's the Establishment." An amorphous term, sure, but a very real thing to see up close. In my head I've created a rough taxonomy of the people in center-left Washington: those who are Down for the Cause and those who are part of the Establishment. It's a rough and visceral divide, more instinctual than analytic; I know it when I see it. There are people who are Down for the Cause who go to work in the White House every day, but they are generally not the people calling the shots.

Which is Obama? He's the only one I can't peg.

"You're right," I say finally. "I have no idea why he gave the keys to Summers. It's frustrating. It's really frustrating."

* * *

With all the talk of balance sheets these days, I've taken to tallying up each side of the "change" ledger: forces pushing toward reform on the left and those that maintain the status quo on the right. After 100 days, this is what I have.

On the right: three decades of accelerating inequality and oligopolistic rent-seeking that has produced a sophisticated set of entrenched interests whose sole mission is to expand the reign of the corporations and the wealthy people they represent; a constitutional system engineered to stymie change and moderate the influence of the rabble; a Senate whose rules and customs bestow maximum power on each sitting senator so that a lone reactionary like Tom Coburn can hold up funding for national parks for more than a year; a degraded (albeit slightly revived) culture of civic engagement; a class of Democratic operatives who seem to have no beliefs, principles or commitments, or who once had them but have been co-opted; a mammoth, ferocious national security bureaucracy willing and able to conduct what Bob Gates cheekily called "guerrilla warfare" to defend its turf; a president who seems to have little appetite for a fight.

On the left: control of both houses of Congress by large margins; dozens of progressive legislators; a wildly popular center-left president who ran on the most ambitious progressive domestic vision in a generation; a polity disgusted with conservative rule and conservatism, so much so that "socialism" has been staging a reputational comeback; a financial crisis that has exposed the bankruptcy of the elite economic consensus; a savvy progressive infrastructure built up during eight long, dark years; and finally, what should perhaps be definitive, healthy majorities who favor a progressive agenda—ending torture and the Iraq war, providing universal healthcare and pursuing a clean energy economy.

Amid the euphoria of election night, it seemed the left side of the ledger was all that mattered. For the past three months it's been hard to ignore the right side. Now it all feels balanced on a knife's edge.

* * *

Congratulations on recognizing the importance of agriculture in America!… As you go about planning and planting the White House garden, we respectfully encourage you to recognize the role conventional agriculture plays in the US in feeding the ever-increasing population, contributing to the US economy and providing a safe and economical food supply. America's farmers understand crop protection technologies are supported by sound scientific research and innovation.

—Letter from the pesticide industry trade group Mid America CropLife Association to First Lady Michelle Obama, expressing its displeasure with her organic garden

* * *

I'm pretty sure the Germans don't have the filibuster, but if they did, they'd have a word for the soul-wrenching misery you feel watching a press conference convened by a handful of preening, self-congratulatory "moderate" senators who have just succeeded in making a bill decidedly worse in deference to some incoherent, abstract notion of "moderateness."

We should have killed off the filibuster when we had a chance. It's got a sorry history: marshaled ignominiously to defeat civil rights and labor legislation. When it comes to the much-needed large-scale reorientation of the American social contract involved in passing universal healthcare and cap-and-trade, the fate of the nation rests largely in the hands of about five senators.

* * *

It is very hard to disappoint many friends who have supported me over the years, on either side, who are urging me to vote their way.… In a highly polarized Senate, many decisive votes are left to a small group who are willing to listen, reject ideological dogmatism, disagree with the party line and make an independent judgment. It is an anguishing position, but we play the cards we are dealt.… I am announcing my decision now because I have consulted with a very large number of interested parties on both sides, and I have made up my mind. Knowing that I will not support cloture on this bill, senators may choose to move on.… —Senator Arlen Specter, announcing his intention to filibuster the Employee Free Choice Act, which he had previously supported

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

On Bush Administration Memos Supporting 'Enhanced Interrogation Techniques'

Jay Bybee, Addington and Yoo
Said one must do what one must do.
It's harsh, of course, to waterboard.
But torture? No. At most, untoward.

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* * *

The first 100 days of the new incarnation of American conservatism has been a fascinating train wreck. Without four decades of culture war gimmicks to rely on, conservatives have rolled the clock back to their Liberty League, Andrew Mellon, Joe McCarthy, gold-bug roots: Rick Perry talks secession; Alabama Representative Spencer Bachus darkly warns of socialists in Congress; and during a commercial break in Glenn Beck's show, I saw an ad for Rosland Capital, a company that will take your money and invest in gold bars. It features G. Gordon Liddy holding up a dollar bill and decrying its declining value. "Buy your gold where I buy mine!" he says.

I have to admit to liking this right better, the one that is contemptuous of the "losers" facing foreclosure, mythologizes its heroic John Galt-ness and rails against exceedingly popular elements of the welfare state, rather than the insidious "compassionate conservatism" and humanitarian imperialism of the past eight years. An honest right is the left's best friend.

* * *

I think [Obama] overestimates his ability to take people—particularly our colleagues on the right—and sort of charm them into being nice. I know he talks about being postpartisan. But I've worked frankly with Newt Gingrich, Tom DeLay and the current Republican leadership.… When he talks about being postpartisan, having seen these people and knowing what they would do in that situation, I suffer from postpartisan depression.

—Barney Frank, on Obama's decision to invite Rick Warren to give the inaugural invocation

* * *

My understanding of how Washington works has two chapters: Before TARP and After TARP. A little more than a year before the collapse of Lehman Brothers, I moved to Washington amid a fierce debate over whether we could afford $35 billion for healthcare for children. So it was eye-opening, to say the least, to watch us fork over twenty times that amount to Wall Street to cover its bad bets.

On July 16, 1877, railroad workers in Martinsburg, West Virginia, responded to a 10 percent pay cut with an impromptu strike that quickly spread to rail lines far and wide. Within a few days the Great Upheaval, a nationwide general strike had shut down most of the economy. How did the government respond? With the bayonets and battalions of the Army, which President Rutherford B. Hayes sent into the streets of Chicago, Baltimore and St. Louis.

The specter that has haunted Capitol Hill since September is a twenty-first-century inversion of the Great Upheaval: a general strike by capital. There are no organizers or grand coordinated plans, but the demand is familiar: we won't do our jobs until you give us what we want. In so doing, Wall Street has declared intellectual bankruptcy in order to remain financially solvent.

"Much later," John Steinbeck wrote of his era's banksters, "when business picked up and business leaders howled with rage against Government control and Mr. Roosevelt, they seemed to forget that they had laid their heads in his lap and wept, begged him to take over, to tell them what to do and how to do it."

At least back then they had the manners to beg.

Honestly, sometimes I think all the money we paid the banks would be worth it if no one was allowed to talk shit about poor people ever again.

* * *

This is a big ocean-liner; it's not a speedboat. It doesn't turn around immediately. —Barack Obama, describing the ship of state at a press conference

* * *

In his first 100 days, Obama has been compared to Washington, Lincoln, FDR and Reagan. I wonder, though, if we won't look back and see him as a figure similar to Nixon. I don't mean we'll see him as a tragic, corrupt man driven by his pathological attachment to sundry resentments but as a president whose visionary understanding of a new political dynamic didn't translate into policy changes on a sufficient scale. The ship of state was subject to many of the same inertial forces during Nixon's time as well, and despite Nixon's genius in harnessing the power of the culture wars, when it came to domestic policy, he more or less maintained, even expanded, the liberal state.

Conservatives had to wait for Reagan to start the revolution. We are, I believe, at the beginning of a long era of progressive ascendance. It may be that this is the last administration conceptually handcuffed by the residual dogmas of late twentieth-century conservatism.

* * *

I know quite a few people who spent months working in the trenches on the campaign. It was grueling, punishing work: sixteen-hour days, living out of duffel bags and eating late-night Taco Bell. But it felt real unlike anything before or since. Now they've won and, in their own small bureaucratic way, are running the country. But they're trapped inside an office building with ID badges.

* * *

One hundred days is one-fourteenth of a four-year presidential term. Take a circle the size of a quarter, then divide it into fourteen equal wedges. Look at the outside edge of each segment individually, and you'll hardly be able to tell that it's curved.

CHRISTOPHER HAYES

Bush's Lingering Blacklist

COMMENT

More than three years ago, KindHearts, a registered charity in Toledo, Ohio, had its offices raided, all its documents and records seized and its assets frozen. The charge against it? There was none. The Treasury Department simply said KindHearts was "under investigation" and invoked a provision of the USA Patriot Act to shut it down. It was never given a trial, a hearing or a statement of reasons. To this day it has not been charged with any wrongdoing, yet its assets are still frozen. The investigation is ongoing, and under the Patriot Act, that is enough to keep the freeze in place.

With all the focus on what to do with the Guantánamo detainees and those who tortured them, the laws governing "material support" to terrorists and terror organizations have received too little attention. The goal of these laws—cutting off

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funds for terrorist activity—is legitimate. But the means employed impose draconian sanctions on little more evidence than guilt by association and grant virtually no due process. The world, and the US courts, are beginning to stand up and take note. The question is whether the White House will.

In September the European Court of Justice ruled that the United Nations Security Council's resolution for designating individuals and groups as "terrorist" and freezing their assets violates fundamental principles of fairness reflected in the European Constitution and therefore cannot be enforced by the European Community. Under the resolution, the Security Council blacklists alleged terrorist organizations and individuals named by member nations, without a trial or hearing, and generally on the basis of secret evidence and allegations not shared with those designated. In December the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that Belgium violated the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by placing two people on the UN terrorist list. And in January the European Union finally took the People's Mujahedeen of Iran off its terrorist list after three court decisions declared the designation unfounded.

The UN process mirrors the domestic procedures President Bush established for listing "specially designated global terrorists." Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, Bush announced, with no explanation, that twenty-seven individuals and groups were "terrorist." He ordered all their assets frozen and made any transaction with them a crime—even if the transaction in question was humanitarian and had no connection to violent or terrorist activity.

At the same time, Bush gave the Treasury Department sweeping authority to designate individuals or groups "terrorist" merely because of associations with those already on the list. Today the list reads like an Arab phone book, with thousands of names. Yet the administration has never published a statement of reasons for any of these "designations," much less afforded anyone a trial. At most, designated individuals or groups receive only a copy of the unclassified evidence on which the Treasury based its decision and an opportunity to submit a written response. But because designations almost always rest on undisclosed classified evidence, the opportunity to respond is a charade. No group has succeeded in overturning a designation.

The consequences for those who associate in any way with a designated group can be severe. In November the Bush administration hailed as a major victory its conviction under these laws of several men associated with the Holy Land Foundation in Dallas. Prosecutors offered no evidence that the men had provided any donations to Hamas, a designated terrorist organization, or had supported any terrorist act. But they argued that the men had nonetheless violated the law by supporting local Palestinian charity committees—none of which were designated as terrorist. Prosecutors claimed after the fact that the charities were fronts for Hamas. Under this theory, a donor acting on purely humanitarian motives who avoids funding anyone on the government's proscribed list is still guilty if the government later says that the group that received funds was connected to others on its list.

US courts initially turned a blind eye to the civil liberties concerns raised by these laws. They upheld the use of secret evidence, rejected arguments that the laws imposed guilt by association and reasoned that because a designated entity's assets were frozen indefinitely rather than permanently forfeited, the Fourth Amendment did not apply. But as in Europe, the tide may be turning.

In November a federal court in Portland, Oregon, ruled that the Treasury had violated a charity's due process rights by failing to notify it of the potential basis for its designation. It also held that freezing a charity's assets for years was a "seizure" that had to be justified under the Fourth Amendment.

In January a federal court of appeals in San Francisco rejected a government appeal from an earlier decision that declared federal prohibitions on providing "services," "training" and "expert advice and assistance" to terrorist groups unconstitutionally vague. And on May 1 a federal judge in Toledo will hear arguments in a constitutional challenge to the extraordinary three-year freeze imposed on KindHearts. The charity contends that being closed down without any judicial process or finding of wrongdoing violates fundamental tenets of due process.

Like the blacklisting tactics of the McCarthy era, today's terror-financing laws allow the government to label groups and individuals as "terrorist" without the most basic elements of due process, and to punish people for associations, regardless of whether their acts contributed to violence. If we are going to pursue our security without abandoning our ideals, as Obama has repeatedly promised, these laws need drastic reform. DAVID COLE

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Obama & Latin America

COMMENT

At the Summit of the Americas—held in Trinidad and Tobago April 17–19 and attended by the leaders of every nation in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba—Barack Obama went far toward repairing the damage caused by more than two decades of disastrous economic policy and seven years of neoconservative interventionism. America's adventures have included support for a failed coup against Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez in 2002, orchestration of a successful one against Haiti's Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 and what appeared to be tacit approval for an attempt to oust Bolivian president Evo Morales last year.

In Trinidad Obama seemed not so much the good neighbor as the good student. He graciously accepted Chávez's gift of Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America* and took notes during Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega's lengthy speech recounting Washington's aggression against his country (of which, as president during Ronald Reagan's Contra war, Ortega had firsthand knowledge). Obama responded to demands that he speak out against a recently thwarted plot to assassinate

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Evo Morales by unequivocally condemning "any efforts at violent overthrows of democratically elected governments, wherever it happens in the hemisphere." And when asked at his closing press conference what he had learned at the summit, Obama said that he'd heard many complaints about a "too rigid application of a free-market doctrine" imposed by "what is termed the 'Washington Consensus.'"

There is no other region, save perhaps Europe, that offers Obama a better chance to practice the kind of cooperative diplomacy he has defined as the goal of his administration. Except for civil war in Colombia and drug violence in Mexico, Latin America is at peace; nuclear weapons are not a concern; most countries are led by democratically elected presidents committed to a progressive hemispheric agenda that would downplay terrorism and put top priority on alleviating poverty, inequality, crime and environmental problems. Yet having diversified their ties with China, Europe and the Middle East over the past decade, Latin American governments now expect to deal with the United States as equals. They are willing to help Washington manage its decline and ease its transition into a multipolar world, but they are no longer likely to submit to its dictates.

If Obama wants Latin America's help, he must do more than listen. At the summit, he said Washington would consider ending its five-decade economic embargo of Cuba (in the run-up to the meeting, the White House lifted a ban on Cuban-Americans traveling and sending money to the island) when Cuban officials send "some signals that they're serious about pursuing change." Republican Senator Lindsey Graham put it more bluntly: "Put up or shut up."

Latin Americans could say the same to us; so far, Obama's good words have not been matched by many good deeds.

In contrast to the diplomatic quagmires in the Middle East and elsewhere, it would be relatively easy to modernize diplomacy in the Americas. Immigration reform and gun control would be good places to start. Mexico's drug-related homicides have increased—last year there were more than 5,000, and 90 percent of the weapons that could be traced came from the United States. Obama could also resurrect the Jubilee Act, which cancels billions in debt from the world's poorest countries, many of them in Latin America. As a senator, Obama was a main sponsor of the bill, which passed the House but died in the Senate.

Yet as with Cuba, on every one of these issues, powerful domestic interests—the Cuban lobby, Wall Street, the National Rifle Association, the hard-right core of the GOP—limit his ability to move beyond rhetoric. Recently asked if the White House would support a renewal of the expired Clinton-era assault rifle ban, for which Mexico's president, Felipe Calderón, has been pleading, Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs demurred, saying, "There's a lot on our plate."

Latin Americans have also been asking Washington to reconsider its "war on drugs," which was recently condemned in a damning report by the Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy, comprising the region's leading intellectuals and politicians. One of the commission members, former president of Brazil Fernando Cardoso, said that the "war on drugs" has had a "disastrous impact on people's lives and the very fabric of society." Another member of the commission, César Gaviria, former president of Colombia, calls the keystone of that war, Plan Colombia—which has so far cost the United States nearly $7 billion—a "total failure." A UN report suggests that cocaine production in Colombia has doubled since 1996, with Plan Colombia merely pushing the transshipment business into Central America and Mexico, leading to skyrocketing violence in those regions. Yet Plan Colombia is not only being extended into Mexico; moves are evidently afoot to have it go viral beyond the Americas. Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that "many of us from all over the world can learn from what has happened with respect to the very successful developments of Plan Colombia," and suggested that it be franchised "specifically to Afghanistan."

On economic policy, concessions Obama made in Trinidad suggest more of the same. He directed US trade representative Ron Kirk to meet with the presidents of Panama and Colombia to jump-start talks on free-trade agreements, which Obama opposed during his campaign. Kirk announced shortly after the summit that NAFTA will not be renegotiated to strengthen labor and environmental provisions, as Obama had pledged.

But Obama deserves praise for refusing to participate in the demonization of Chávez. Love or hate him, Chávez is considered a legitimate leader by all Latin American countries and is a close ally of many. A majority of Venezuelans, in respected opinion polls, have consistently ranked the quality of their democracy as among the best in Latin America. The US press caricature of the Venezuelan president, in other words, says less about Chávez than about the US propensity to vilify its critics, especially if they're from the Third World. In Trinidad Obama seemed aware of how this demonization perverts domestic and foreign policy and intent on overcoming that through dialogue with Chávez. Asked at a closing press conference to respond to criticisms that shaking hands with the Venezuelan president puts the United States "in danger," Obama felt compelled to remind reporters that Venezuela's "defense budget is probably one-600th of the United States'"—a welcome return to reality-based diplomacy.

This provoked a predictable backlash from the right—Iran/Contra hand Otto Reich called the president's "hobnobbing" with Chávez "embarrassing"—and it remains to be seen if Obama will hold his ground. Yet at the end of the summit he ventured the outlines of an encouraging "Obama doctrine." When a US president declares a doctrine, it usually entails what proportion of death squads, troops and missiles he will deploy. So it was a relief to hear one defined in terms of a willingness to engage with countries whose interests and ideas might diverge from Washington's.

"We're only one nation," the president said, and the "problems that we confront, whether it's drug cartels, climate change, terrorism, you name it, can't be solved just by one country. And I think if you start with that approach, then you are inclined to listen and not just talk."

GREG GRANDIN

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Eric Alterman

The Newspaper Biz: 'More Poison, Please'?

The men and women who continue to work in the newspaper business inhabit a surreal world. It's as if they are organisms inside a body felled by a fatal disease, and all the doctors prescribe is more poison. Charge for individual articles on the web? That would just send people to the free stuff. Demand that Google compensate the newspapers for the links? Watch your stories disappear when they stop coming up in Google searches. Stop publishing a print edition? Lose what's left of your only significant earnings base. Oh well—there's always more room for deeper budget cuts, more section cuts, more buyouts, fewer editors, etc.

The absurdity of the current moment is best exemplified by the recent threat by the New York Times Company to shut down the *Boston Globe* within thirty days if the paper doesn't find $20 million in immediate savings, including $10 million from its Newspaper Guild unit. While the guild did not reject the notion of concessions, neither did it give much indication that it appreciates the precariousness of its position. Its representatives insisted on a set of conditions that show little awareness on their part that their industry is in the process of evaporating before our eyes. Demands, for instance, that the paper institute a "revenue sharing" plan presuppose the existence of "revenue" in the future. But the *Globe* lost $50 million last year and is expected to lose $85 million this year. Between 2004 and 2010 revenue is projected to fall more than 40 percent, its pension plan is significantly underfunded and some of its members enjoy lifetime job guarantees. And yet the Times Company is demanding only $20 million in cuts? It strikes me that the guild is awfully lucky that the Times is willing to continue to subsidize so expensive an enterprise so generously. In fact, were I a Times Company shareholder, I'd be tempted to march into its annual meeting and ask, "Just what the hell kind of business is this, anyway?"

The meagerness of the cuts makes sense only if one believes that the downturn in the *Globe*'s financial fortunes is temporary. Alas, you'd get better odds betting on the cryogenic regeneration of Ted Williams's severed head. In fact, everything is getting worse, fast. At the end of 2008, print advertising sales had fallen by more than 25 percent industrywide in just three years. And guess what? The first quarter of 2009 is estimated to have been the worst one yet; a drop of 30 percent for many papers, with no end in sight. (Times Company ad revenue fell 27 percent during the quarter, leading to losses of approximately $75 million.) Even the growth in online advertising has recently reversed itself, leaving no imaginable lifeline.

Again, from a purely business standpoint, no one at the *Globe* is in a position to demand anything of the Times Company at all, so long as its only realistic plan is to continue to lose lots of money.

One can argue that newspapers are a "public trust" and that their owners are morally obliged to subsidize their communities by providing a service, as a philanthropic enterprise, destined to lose tens of millions—and possibly more than that—every year. But that's not going to be a popular argument at a shareholders' meeting. And if you argue that the Sulzbergers owe it, for historical and familial reasons, to the *New York Times*—well, maybe. But they sure don't owe it to the *Boston Globe*.

It will be tempting for the *Globe* guild to tell the Times Company to take a hike. After all, if the business is dying, they might as well march to its funeral with full pay in their pockets. Professor Robert Forrant, of the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, is surely right when he points out that concessions rarely save dying production facilities in businesses threatened with extinction. "You give back wages, and the structural problems remain," he notes. It's an agonizing choice, no doubt, for the people involved, and not one anyone needs my advice about how to address.

But so long as we continue to think of the business of providing our society with news as a "business" in the traditional sense, we will keep feeding it the poison that is hastening its death. A recent Princeton University study on the consequences of the 2007 shutdown of the *Cincinnati Post* found a decline in the number of people voting in local elections as well as the number of candidates willing to challenge incumbents. "If voter turnout, a broad choice of candidates and accountability for incumbents are important to democracy," say its authors, economist Sam Schulhofer-Wohl and researcher Miguel Garrido, then this indicates that the loss of local newspapers implies an immediate and measurable decline in the quality of local democracy.

The Times Company's threat to the *Boston Globe* was followed by a meeting of "civic leaders and innovators," called by the Boston Foundation to try to address questions exactly like this one. Originally, an e-mail circulated by the *Boston Business Journal* said that the foundation was also planning to discuss the possibility of locating a buyer. Alas, a correction was soon issued to clarify the point that the meeting would not address trying to find the *Globe* a buyer. That would simply be too much to ask…

Rumblings in the Senate—including a bill introduced by Benjamin Cardin of Maryland to allow newspapers to become nonprofit entities and a set of hearings, recently announced by John Kerry, directly related to the *Globe*'s troubles—indicate some awareness of the crisis. But the notion that Congress is likely to act in time, and with sufficient creativity, to help save a business that cannot save itself is one more fairy tale I cannot bring myself to believe. It's painful to admit, but admit it we must: we have no more hope today of saving the "newspaper business" than we do the "telegraph business." What is needed—pronto—is a plan to save the collection and dissemination of the news itself. ■

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Has the 'JOURNAL' LOST ITS SOUL?

The uncertain future of Murdoch's paper

SCOTT SHERMAN

In the upper ranks of American newspaper editors, Eugene Roberts is a highly regarded figure: under his stewardship in the 1970s and '80s, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* won seventeen Pulitzer Prizes in eighteen years. Last spring, while researching a piece about Rupert Murdoch's acquisition of the *Wall Street Journal*, a reporter for *The Atlantic* contacted Roberts and found him in a pessimistic frame of mind: "Murdoch says he wants to turn it into something more like the *New York Times*," Roberts said, "but I suspect it will end up looking more like *USA Today*."

I recently phoned Roberts and asked him if the *Wall Street Journal* had, in fact, emerged as a replica of Gannett's *USA Today*. Roberts retreated from his earlier remark and made it clear, in his low-key manner, that he admires Murdoch's *Journal*: "I've been impressed with what I've seen so far," he told me. "There is more foreign reporting. It's more of a general-interest newspaper. On the whole they are doing a good job of pursuing political and national stories fairly and accurately."

Indeed, Murdoch's *Journal* is winning praise from many quarters. "I think it's better," says Walter Pincus of the *Washington Post*. "They're printing more stories. Their coverage of Washington has expanded." Says columnist E.J. Dionne Jr.: "I am reading the new *Journal* with great pleasure because business and economic news is now everybody's news and because they continue to have some first-rate political reporting." "The *Journal* is a much improved newspaper," says Harold Evans, who clashed bitterly with Murdoch at the *Times* of London in 1981. "I think the way they've begun to cover politics and the extra space they've put into the paper—that's all to the good. Let's not underestimate the fact that this is a pretty massive investment that they are making."

These comments come as something of a surprise: a great many soothsayers had predicted that Murdoch's ownership would have regrettable, if not catastrophic, consequences for the newspaper. Murdoch stoked those fears: he joked with *Time* in June 2007, six months before he concluded his $5.6 billion acquisition of Dow Jones & Company, owner of the *Journal*, that he would put tabloid-style photos of half-naked women in its hallowed pages—provided those women had MBA degrees.

But the wrecking ball has not come to the *Journal*; sleaze has not invaded its pages; the most dire fears have not been realized. Murdoch has not extinguished quality writing at the paper; he has not transformed the China coverage to benefit his business interests in China; he has not terminated the paper's superb coverage of art, photography, music, dance and theater; he has not murdered the "A-hed," the quirky feature that has adorned Page 1 since 1941; and so on. Says Byron Calame, a deputy assistant managing editor of the *Journal* who went on to become public editor of the *New York Times* from 2005 to 2007: "I'm not aware of any corruption of the news standards."

But the *Journal* has changed in very significant ways. Quite a few *Journal* watchers—including many people who left the paper but continue to care deeply about it—are reading it with disquiet and unease. They see a newspaper whose coverage of the financial crisis, while impressive in many respects,

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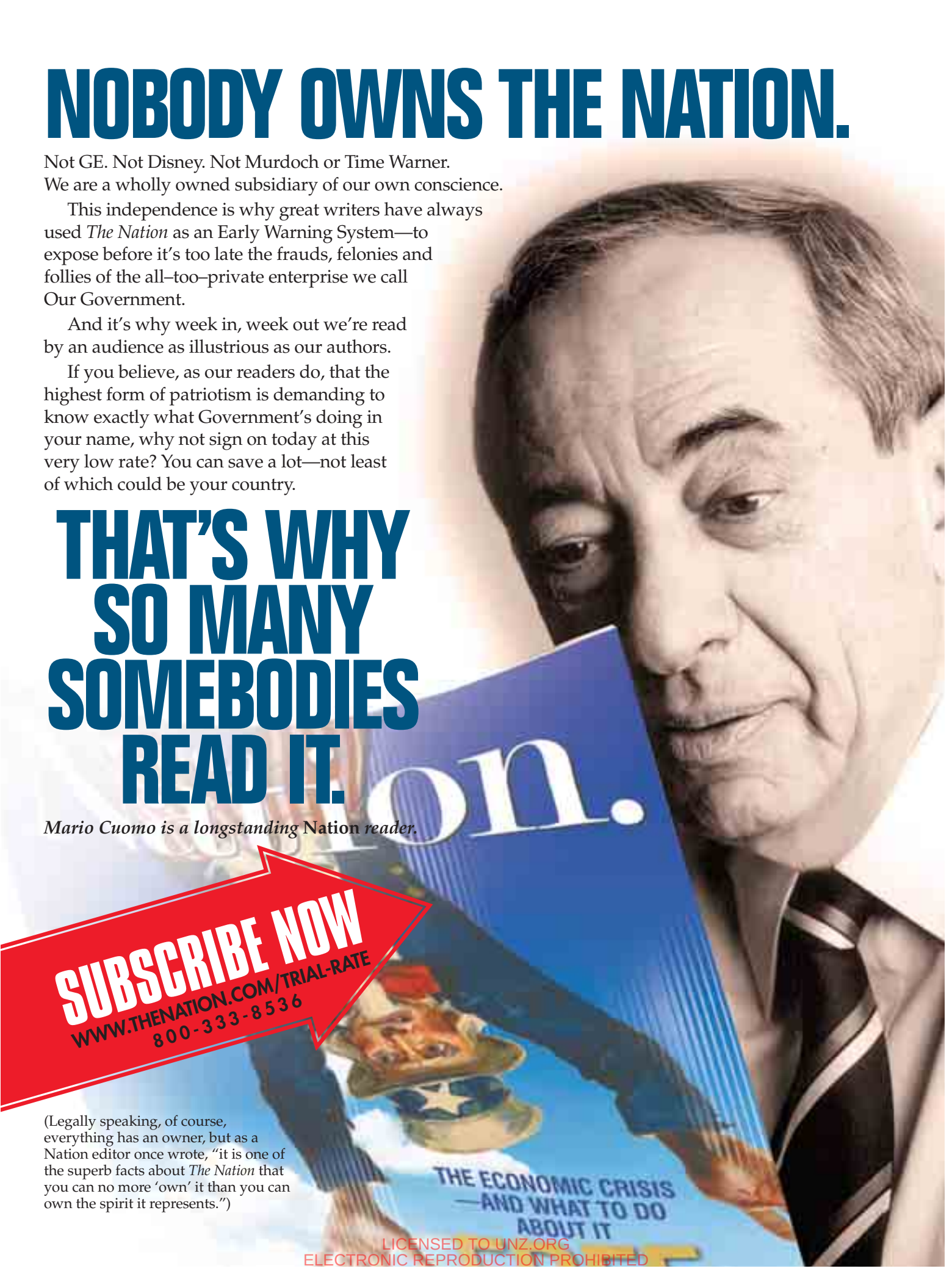

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lacks analytical rigor; a newspaper that is running shorter articles; a newspaper whose copy-editing standards have declined; and a newspaper that is abandoning a rich tradition of long-form narrative journalism.

One picks up the *Journal* these days with relief and sadness—relief that the newspaper is not an amalgamation of the Murdoch-owned *New York Post*, Fox News and *The Weekly Standard*; and sadness that reporters who once wrote finely textured, emotionally affecting feature stories on a universe of subjects now produce, in too many cases, ordinary news stories. "Scoops" and "news" are the new Murdochian mantras, and reporters are generally expected to spend two or three weeks on a piece, not two or three months. Long-form journalism, says one reporter, is "less cherished, less savored" by the new regime led by Murdoch's handpicked editor in chief, Robert Thomson, former editor of Murdoch's *Times* of London. (Thomson declined to be interviewed for this article.)

"For decades the DNA of the *Journal* was this double helix: incredibly strong business reporting and incredibly strong narrative/analytical writing," says Joshua Prager, a long-form reporter who recently left the newspaper after almost thirteen years. "But now they've ripped one of the strands out of it: narrative writing is all but gone. As a result, the *Wall Street Journal* has lost its soul."

Others agree that long-form writing has taken a hit. "As a reader," says Bill Keller, executive editor of the *New York Times*, "I really miss the long, well-told narratives and ambitious investigative projects. Thomson decries that kind of journalism as a self-indulgence, although I think it brought the old *Journal* great respect and devotion."

Murdoch has not corrupted the *Journal*. Instead, he has smothered it and made it ordinary. When Prager invokes the *Journal*'s "soul," he is referring to a tradition that was old-fashioned in the best sense, the sense that valued novelty, surprise and seriousness. An old copy of the *Journal* was a bit like an old copy of *The New Yorker*: one could pick it up months later and find something fresh, enduring and original. Today, if you pick up a month-old copy of the *Journal*, you will mostly find stale news.

Jim Sterba, who joined the *Wall Street Journal* in 1982 after sixteen unhappy years as a reporter at A.M. Rosenthal's *New York Times*, captured the old *Journal* in his 2003 book *Frankie's Place: A Love Story*.

> *Journal* correspondents never wrote stories that began, "President Bhutto today denounced." They never wrote a story from Vietnam as I often did for the *Times* that began: "B-52 bombers hit fresh suspected enemy strongholds south of the Demilitarized Zone today." *Journal* correspondents went looking for their own stories, often wandering serendipitously across the landscape, going wherever the thread of an idea took them. They seemed to take as much time as they needed.… They could be subtle.

The serendipity and subtlety were principally displayed on Page 1, whose design called to mind newspapers of the nineteenth century: columns of undisturbed prose, accentuated by black-and-white line drawings, nestled beneath sly, multilayered headlines. (Photographs did not appear regularly until 2002.) Yet there was nothing antiquated about the writing: Page 1 was not primarily a venue for "hard news" and journalistic ephemera but a home for explanatory narrative, interpretation and storytelling. As a national newspaper, the *Journal* occupied a special niche: it was a "second read," perused after the *San Diego Union-Tribune* or the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, which in turn gave the *Journal* the freedom to focus on long-form, Page 1 "leders" in which reporters invested much of their time and energy, and by which they were judged and promoted. Erik Larson, Jane Mayer, Ron Suskind, James B. Stewart, Susan Faludi, Bryan Burrough, Alex Kotlowitz, Tony Horwitz and Geraldine Brooks are just some of the writers who launched their careers on Page 1 of the *Journal*.

At its best, in an epoch that future historians will view as a "golden age" for US newspapers, the *Journal*'s front page excelled at various forms: explanatory reporting on politics, economics, science and social trends; deeply researched profiles of companies and executives; and investigative reporting. The *Journal* pursued General Motors, Mobil Oil, Occidental Petroleum, Texas Instruments, Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., Apple and hundreds of other corporations, which inspired Ralph Nader to proclaim that, aside from its "Pleistocene" editorial page, the *Journal* was "the most effective muckraking daily paper in the country.… the main reporter in our country of corporate crime." (Nader's words prompted Robert Sherrill to read an entire year of the *Journal*'s corporate crime coverage for a *Nation* cover story in 1997.)

Murdoch's ownership has not wrecked the *Journal*, as many had predicted. But the paper has changed in very significant ways.

Finally, there was a remarkable tradition of immersion journalism: Alex Kotlowitz spent twelve weeks with a teenage boy and his family in the Henry Horner housing project in Chicago; Judith Valente lived for two months, around the clock, with a family whose son was wasting away from AIDS; Tony Horwitz took a job at a poultry plant in Mississippi to document the brutal conditions inside. This is not to say that Page 1 was flawless or that the Kotlowitz-type narratives were dominant. But they were never absent from the medley, and staffers clearly recall the words of former managing editor Paul Steiger, who led the paper from 1991 to 2007: "Go find stories with moral force."

As time went on, there was less money to pay for those kinds of stories. Under the Bancroft family, Dow Jones was a financial powerhouse until the late 1980s. But advertising revenue never fully recovered from the crash of 1987, and austerity measures were imposed. Ad revenue plunged again after 9/11, and Dow

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Jones bled $8 million in 2002. Ken Auletta reported in *The New Yorker* that 1,700 Dow Jones employees were fired between 2000 and 2003—a series of blows, some contend, that weakened the quality of the long-form writing on Page 1. Recalls Byron Calame: "I don't know how many years back, but people would say, 'If the price of the stock goes any lower, Murdoch will grab us.' That was not a remark anyone made with joy."

On December 13, 2007, Rupert Murdoch marched into the *Journal* newsroom to deliver a victory oration. "It is a new day in the history of this company," he said. "We've come here to expand it, to develop it and, where possible, to improve all of its products." He concluded with these words: "You better get back to work and make sure you're not scooped tomorrow."

Why the new emphasis on scoops, news and speed? One reason, it seems, has to do with Murdoch's stated goal of vanquishing the *New York Times*. Murdoch can't easily do that in New York City, where the *Times* has deep loyalty and penetration. But he is obviously keen to persuade educated, affluent readers in San Diego or Atlanta to switch from the *Times* to the *Journal*. (The hiring of Thomas Frank, who writes a political column every Wednesday, can certainly be viewed as a play for liberal-minded *Times* readers.) But it must be said that the news-oriented approach at the *Journal* is not Murdoch's innovation: faced with mounting competition in the 1970s and '80s, *Journal* editors allowed more news to appear on Page 1, a trend that accelerated after 9/11, when the paper unveiled a major redesign of its front page that emphasized color and readability; critics howled that the page had been "neutered."

Many staffers believe the *Journal* has ceded some of its best assets—in-depth analysis and long-form, narrative-driven articles.

A Murdochian business strategy that accelerates the news tempo of Page 1 has clearly resulted in fewer stories with "moral force." But the approach has yielded some rich results nevertheless. The *Journal*'s coverage of the terrorist assault on Mumbai in late November, for example, was a deeply impressive display of talent and resources; it is unlikely that the old *Journal*, with its feature-writing orientation, could have equaled it. Other examples abound: on March 3, when federal prosecutors announced that the CIA had destroyed ninety-two videotapes of interrogations of Al Qaeda suspects, the *Journal* put the story smack in the middle of Page 1; the *New York Times* ran it on Page A16.

Even critics of editor Robert Thomson admit that the *Journal* has scored a large number of scoops in the past year. Consider a March 4 Page 1 story headlined Merrill's $10 Million Men, in which reporter Susanne Craig identified eleven Merrill Lynch executives who took home more than $10 million in 2008, a year when the firm's net loss was $27.6 billion. New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo immediately issued subpoenas to several of the executives named in Craig's article.

Yet on many other occasions the news approach of the *Journal* seems bland and shopworn. On February 17, Page 1 had two photographs of Shoichi Nakagawa, the Japanese finance minister whose comatose demeanor at a G-7 meeting in Rome generated criticism. But the accompanying story, buried deep inside the paper, was scant and lackluster. For some *Journal* veterans, this amounts to an attenuation of the newspaper's historic identity. Referring to some recent Page 1 decisions, Calame says, "Putting a picture of an early play from the Super Bowl on top of Page 1, or putting A-Rod big and bold in the middle of the front page is not being unique—it's being like everyone else." (It should be noted that the *Journal* did not win any Pulitzers this year; the *Times* won five.)

Others welcome the new approach. "One of my complaints about my paper and the *Times*," says the *Washington Post*'s Walter Pincus, "is that we print too many long stories. People need time to read newspapers. They don't spend a longer time on newspapers than they did forty years ago. It's still twenty to twenty-five minutes." Others raise the issue of quantity versus quality in the *Journal*. John Harwood, who now writes for the *Times*, spent sixteen years covering Washington for the *Journal*, during which time his mandate was not scoops and speed but analysis, brevity and explanatory reporting. "Now when I look at the *Journal*, I see too many stories," Harwood says. "And I yearn for some of the synthesizing that we used to do." For reporters at the paper today, he notes, "there is much more pressure to have more stories in the paper."

The new emphasis on breaking news, combined with the paper's historic expertise in business, should, theoretically, guarantee its supremacy in coverage of Wall Street corruption and the current financial implosion. In an interview with me, Ken Auletta described the *Journal*'s recent economic reporting as "fearless." But the *Journal*'s performance has also drawn criticism. Writing on the website of the *Columbia Journalism Review* (where I am a contributing editor), Dean Starkman argued on December 24 that the *Journal*'s financial coverage, compared with that of the *New York Times* and Bloomberg News, is "too incremental, overly geared toward those already in the know, and too willing to trade arms-length scrutiny for access."

Starkman's view is that the *Times*, Bloomberg and the *Journal* have displayed different angles of vision: "The *Journal*… understands it is reporting the greatest financial *story* of our lives. Bloomberg and the *Times* understand…that they are also reporting the greatest-ever financial *scandal*." Reporters writing about scandals tend to punch harder and faster than reporters doing mere "stories." Consider how the *Journal* and the *Times* have chosen to cover Robert Rubin's tenure at Citigroup. In the November 23 *Times*, Eric Dash and Julie Creswell published a devastating exposé that highlighted Rubin's responsibility for Citigroup's woes. The piece, which ran on Page 1 of the Sunday edition, was written with unusual force, clarity and purpose. Six days later, the *Journal* ran a less detailed, more deferential article on the same subject.

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For those who keep track, Starkman concluded with this scorecard: "The *Journal* has been beaten on Citi, Goldman, Paulson, the Federal Reserve bailout and AIG; it has won on the SEC, Lehman and Bear Stearns, and held its own on Fannie, Freddie, regulators and Greenspan." A number of current and former *Journal* staffers interviewed for this article supported Starkman's broad thesis: that the paper has, to some extent, ceded one of its main assets—the ability to undertake in-depth, explanatory reporting on the structural roots of the financial crisis—to Bloomberg News and the *Times*. Many *Journal* watchers cite a recent series in the *Times* titled "The Reckoning," in which the Dash/Creswell article appeared, as a model of what the old *Journal* would have aspired to.

"What was great about the *Journal* was that it allowed people to pursue their different abilities," says Joshua Prager, who recently accepted a buyout from the newspaper. "I'm good at writing long feature stories. I'm horrible at breaking news. They didn't make me do that after a while. That's why the paper worked." I'm sitting with Prager at a restaurant in Upper Manhattan. It's a gray morning in early March, and a cold rain is falling. Prager is a wiry, dark-haired man of 38 who, owing to a car accident, walks with a cane. In his post-*Journal* life, he intends to write a book about trauma and disability. What really matters now to *Journal* management, he says, is "breaking news and byline counts: the number of bylines that appear in a given year. So people are desperately churning out stories. You have incredibly talented reporters who could be writing beautiful pieces that are much more in depth. They are encouraged not to now." (Prager admits that some reporters "whose talents lie in breaking news and following stories" have done well under the Murdoch/Thomson regime.)

The classic "leder" is clearly dying, but it has not vanished. Recent standouts include Yaroslav Trofimov on the rise of nonviolent resistance in Kashmir, José de Córdoba on the encroachment of drug cartels into the vital Mexican city of Monterrey, Justin Scheck on drug addiction counselors who become heroin addicts and Mark Maremont on a private equity con man. One can add to this list, and yet close observers agree that the paper is publishing fewer long-form, narrative-driven articles. Those that are published tend to appear in the Weekend Edition, published on Saturday. Murdoch told *Time* in 2007 that the *Journal*'s longer, in-depth pieces should be held for the weekend. And to a large extent this has been done. Yet the lively weekend edition is not flourishing. When I asked *Journal* spokesman Robert Christie about the Saturday paper, he replied, "It's expensive to run and deliver. It is not making the kind of money I think people had hoped it would make." This is cause for concern: if the *Journal* ever decided for financial reasons to eliminate the Weekend Edition, those stories could be marooned.

As for the long pieces that still do appear, a subtle and disturbing shift has taken place: most of them are "on the news." That makes sense, up to a point; newspaper readers want the latest information. But the most distinguished newspapers transcend the narrow boundaries of "news." The old *Journal* certainly did. By and large, the articles that brought the most

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honor to the pre-Murdoch *Journal* were conceived with little thought to the news cycle.

To insist on a news component for long-form and investigative reporting, as Murdoch and Thomson are doing, is to evince a shallow understanding of—and a slight appreciation for—those fragile genres. One of the finest *Journal* leders I've read is "Life and Death," Gary Fields's 2005 profile of Richard "Grasshopper" Leggett, a 53-year-old carpenter at Angola Prison in Louisiana, who builds seven-foot coffins for his fellow inmates. Sentences like this bring the piece to life: "At Angola, funerals are elaborate affairs, with hand-made coffins pulled to graves by horse-drawn carriages, in rites conducted almost entirely by inmates." In its emotional power, its tight, radiant language and its wide sweep, "Life and Death" reveals more about prison life than twenty ordinary newspaper stories. There isn't much room for sparkling, poignant features about prison carpenters in today's *Journal*.

But do *Journal* reporters of Fields's caliber still feel they can do high-quality work outside that tradition? It's a knotty question I attempted to answer by contacting them. One of the first *Journal* reporters I called was Jonathan Kaufman, who, over the course of a long career, has produced splendid leders on race, immigration and education: his work embodies the finest qualities of the old *Journal*. But Kaufman is leaving the *Journal* for Bloomberg News; he declined to speak with *The Nation*. I went on to contact twenty-nine staffers, including the most distinguished reporters and editors; not one would talk on the record, and only a few agreed to speak off the record. Fear is stalking the hallways of the *Journal*, which will soon vacate its Lower Manhattan office for new digs at News Corp headquarters in Midtown.

Another writer I attempted to reach was Lucette Lagnado, who, since 1996, has covered a crucial beat for the *Journal*: hospitals, the poor, the uninsured. One of her most vivid and outstanding pieces, which clearly took months of work and which generated Congressional action, appeared in 2007 under this headline: Prescription Abuse Seen in U.S. Nursing Homes; Powerful Antipsychotics Used to Subdue Elderly; Huge Medicaid Expense. I was curious about Lagnado's current situation at the paper: on February 20 she wrote a meager article about falling prices for luxury real estate in the Hamptons. And on April 4 she produced a leder on the parental duties of the elderly during the economic crisis—one that was noticeably less ambitious in scope than her usual investigative fare. But Lagnado declined to talk to me: "I shall not be available for your story," she wrote in an e-mail. Over the next year or two, Lagnado's fate—and those of several dozen old-school, independent-minded reporters like her—will reveal much about Murdoch's *Journal*. Says Prager, "A tremendous number of reporters there are frustrated now."

That frustration could mount in the coming months. On March 19 Thomson sent the staff a memo regarding the integration of the *Journal* with Dow Jones Newswires, which competes with Bloomberg and Thomson Reuters in the lucrative financial news market. In the past, reporters were encouraged to produce material for the Newswires, but now it is mandatory. As Thomson wrote, "Even a headstart of a few seconds is priceless for a commodities trader or a bond dealer.... henceforth all *Journal* reporters will be judged, in significant part, by whether they break news for the Newswires." With its emphasis on speed over analysis, and its insistence that every reporter fall into line, Thomson's memo might well be seen, in the years to come, as one more nail in the coffin of long-form writing at the *Journal*.

One striking consequence of the meltdown of the US newspaper industry has been the semi-rehabilitation of Rupert Murdoch. A boogeyman who was vilified for attempting to purchase Dow Jones is being extolled for his commitment to ink, paper, printing presses and a well-staffed newsroom. Talking to people about Murdoch's *Journal*, one hears countless variations on this theme: "Well, at least Rupert's investing in it..." The Media Baron Who Loves Print was the headline of a recent *New York Times* article about the Australian press lord. *Journal* spokesman Robert Christie puts it this way: "He's largely viewed, whether you like him or not, as someone who has invested in and is saving the paper."

A key question remains: is the new regime committed to unbiased reporting, or will the paper embrace a politicized slant on the news?

Perhaps so. But admirers of the *Journal* should not overlook what has been lost or ignore Murdoch's heavy hand. In early 2008 he forced out the paper's well-regarded editor, Marcus Brauchli, in a way that circumvented a "special committee" established as a condition of the sale of Dow Jones to News Corp. Part of the committee's mandate was to preserve the *Journal*'s editorial independence, for which it was given "rights of approval" on the hiring and firing of the managing editor. But Murdoch ignored the committee (whose members received annual salaries of $100,000) and, in the words of *Slate* press critic Jack Shafer, reduced its members to "a set of high-paid flunkies."

Brauchli, now executive editor of the *Washington Post*, was replaced by Thomson, the US managing editor of the *Financial Times* before he took over the *Times* of London. In public Thomson is quick to praise his boss: "Rupert is passionate about newspapers; he's passionate about news," he told a group of journalism students in 2008. "What we are experiencing at the *Wall Street Journal* is the articulation of that passion."

First-rate editors not only praise their publishers in public but challenge them behind closed doors. Is Thomson strong and confident enough to challenge Murdoch? On that score, *Journal* watchers are not optimistic. "I don't think there is any possibility that Thomson will stand up to Murdoch on any major issue," says former *Journal* executive editor Fred Taylor. "That's why he's in that job." Time will tell if Thomson, like his predecessors Taylor, Norman Pearlstine and Paul Steiger, is interested in stories with "moral force," or if he is merely Murdoch's caretaker and custodian.

Some staffers were jolted by Thomson's announcement, in

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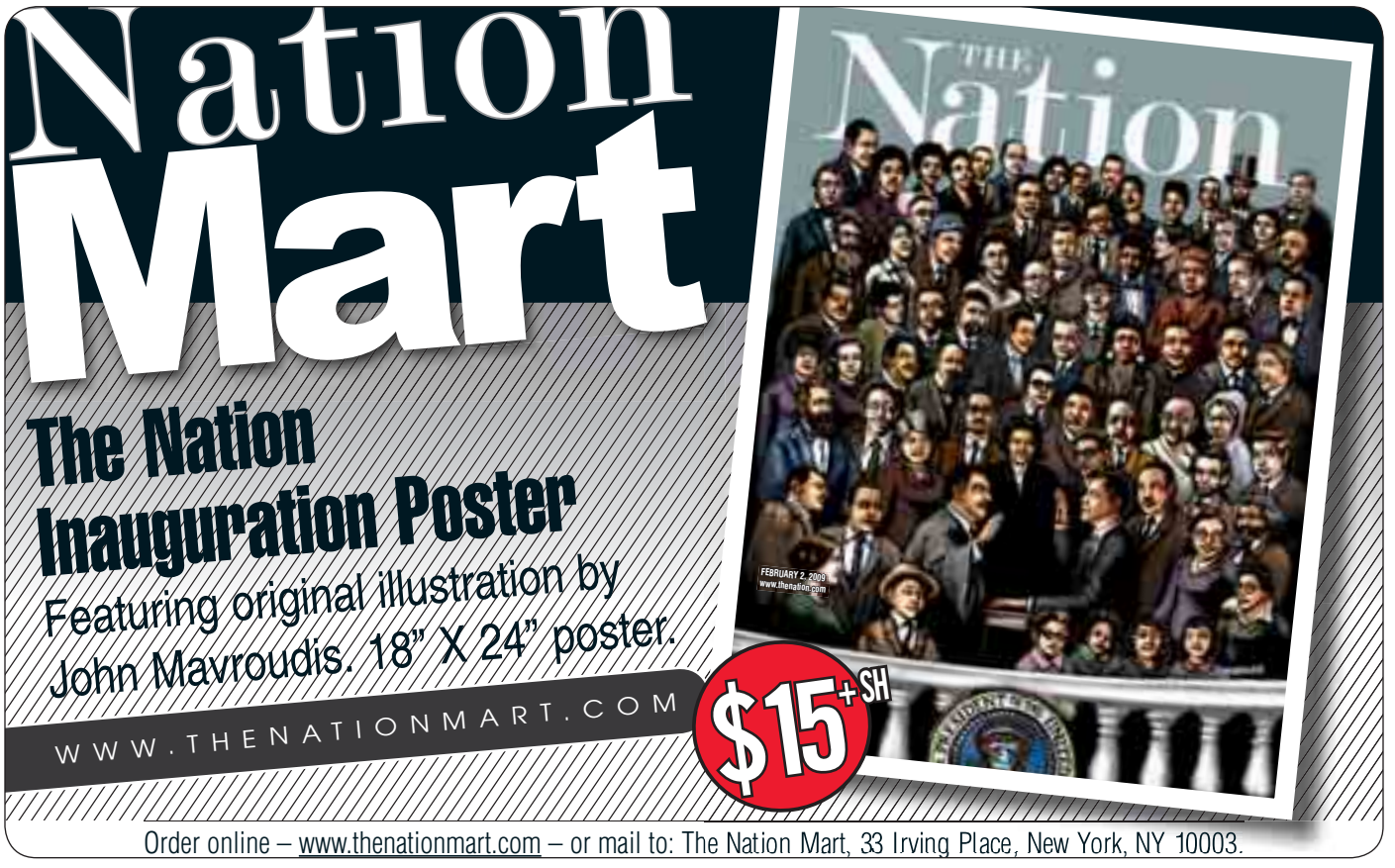
November, that the paper's new deputy editor in chief would be Gerard Baker, a veteran of the BBC, the *Financial Times* and the *Times* of London, where he served, most recently, as US editor and (conservative) columnist. Writing in the *Times* of London on November 7, Baker lamented, "An Obama administration and a solidly Democratic Congress represent the most significant and unwelcome leftward tilt in American politics in at least a generation." Some *Journal* staff have circulated, with amusement and dismay, a YouTube clip originating from Fox News, in which Baker offers a puerile commentary on the candidacy of Barack Obama. Says one staffer with a sigh: "It seems doubtful they conducted an exhaustive nationwide search to find the best qualified candidate for the number-two job in the *Journal*'s newsroom. What does it tell you that someone like Baker was appointed?"

Overt bias in the *Journal*'s news columns has been rare. But a handful of recent ledes and headlines raise eyebrows. Consider the opening sentence of the paper's Page 1 story on January 29, concerning the stimulus package: "The House passed an $819 billion tax-and-spending bill Wednesday…" Or this Page 1 headline from February 26: $318 Billion Tax Hit Proposed. (The *New York Times*, in contrast, chose the headline Obama to Call for Higher Tax on Top Earners.) If Paul Steiger or Marcus Brauchli were still at the helm of the *Journal*, no one would fret about bias in the news columns. However, a fundamental question remains about the new regime: are Murdoch, Thomson and Baker truly committed to the old model of unbiased news reporting, or might they be tempted to embrace a more politicized, pugnacious and populist version of the news?

"I'm a little puzzled by the *Journal*'s evolving identity," *Times* executive editor Bill Keller told me in an e-mail. "Some days the front page is mostly general-interest news, like a cross between the *Times* and *USA Today*. Then the next day you get a front like today [March 12], when the lead story ("EBay Retreats in Web Retailing") is clearly aimed at core business readers. Some days the tone is *FT* (a top-of-the-page curtain raiser on the G-20 summit); some days it is tabloid populist (lashing the million-dollar-bonus recipients at Merrill). If the paper has made up its mind what it wants to be, it's not clear to me. Maybe they hope we'll all keep reading just to see how they resolve their identity crisis."

Journal staffers, too, are uncertain about the paper's overall direction. "Because of the election and the financial crisis, and the daily crush of big, breaking news, the last six months were not typical," says one reporter. "The test will come when all that settles down, when we have a less tumultuous news cycle. At that point we'll see how things shake out." A former reporter, sounding like Eugene Roberts circa 2008, is more bitingly cynical: "This country will soon have two *USA Today*s and one *New York Times*." (Some of the bloated color graphics that have recently appeared in the *Journal* do call to mind *USA Today* or the *New York Post*.) But the prevailing sentiment among *Journal* staff is relief that, at a time when thousands of newspaper jobs have been liquidated, they are still employed. Says one *Journal* reporter: "Is it better to be on a sinking ship, or one that's been captured by pirates? While other newspapers are going down, for now we're still afloat." ■



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Mining Bolivia's Past

The movement that elected Evo Morales—and that pressures him now—has deep roots.

by CHESA BOUDIN

With just under 10 million people, Bolivia has slightly less than three times the population of Montana, but its internal politics have drawn worldwide attention recently. Since its election in 2005, the government of Evo Morales has been roiled by secessionist revolt from the right, disaffection among its erstwhile supporters on the left and hostile broadsides from a US government that has regarded its close relationship with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez's self-proclaimed socialist revolution with discomfort.

Morales, a charismatic nationalist and Bolivia's first indigenous president, was elected largely as a result of his deep connection with the country's rural poor. He was a coca farmer, the president of the farmers' union and has been vocal in his criticism of the US government's efforts to eradicate Bolivia's coca crops. The key role of the farmers' movement in the country's dramatic political transformation is well known, but that movement's revolutionary program and organization had its origins outside the rural sector, as I discovered when visiting the country in 2002 and again in 2006.

My first trip through Bolivia was made on a bus, which wound its way through a high-altitude desert to the beautiful colonial city of Potosí, in the middle of the country. While eating breakfast in a cafe in town, I met a miner named Fecundo. He invited me to come and see the nearby silver mine where he and his team worked.

And so the next day, shortly after sunrise, I traveled to Cerro Rico, the 16,000-foot mountain that looms above the city. The mountain has actually shrunk since the Spanish began mining its rich veins in the mid-1500s. The windswept entrance to the mine where Fecundo and his fellow workers scratched a living was a crude tunnel that looked out over a vista of warehouses, mineral processing sheds and barracks-like dorms. Barrel-chested, his left cheek bulging with coca leaves, Fecundo led me inside. I tied a bandanna over my face, flipped on the headlamp strapped to my yellow helmet and followed him into the bowels of the earth.

As we descended deep into the dank tunnel, all natural light disappeared. I had to crouch to avoid banging my head on the ceiling. Fecundo steered me through a mazelike system of narrow tunnels, some of them dropping steeply and others heading off into the dark nothingness beyond the reach of my headlamp. In some places the ceiling seemed to be sweating beads of water; in others tiny stalactites hung from the roof. After a few minutes, I was panting for breath from the altitude and the dust-laden air, and fighting acute claustrophobia.

Chesa Boudin, a Rhodes Scholar, is a student at Yale Law School. This article was adapted from Gringo: A Coming-of-Age in Latin America *(Scribner).*

TIM ROBINSON

Several hundred feet down the tunnel we came across a lone miner. His red-brown skin, typical of Bolivia's indigenous people, was coated with a layer of fine gray powder. Gloveless, he was hammering a face of stone with a pick in one hand and a mallet in the other. Fecundo yelled to him in Quechua, one of the two primary Indian languages spoken throughout Bolivia's highlands. Like most of Bolivia's miners and more than half of the country's inhabitants, Fecundo and his team spoke Spanish only as a second language.

The man came over to greet us, smiling. Fecundo offered him a pinch of his coca leaves, while I proffered one of the $3 bags of dynamite that, on Fecundo's advice, I had purchased from one of the mining supply stores as presents for the miners. The small gray cylinders came in a clear plastic bag and felt almost weightless. It was hard to believe they had the power to bite into solid rock, but that day I watched from a safe distance as the miners used carefully placed charges to turn a rock wall into rubble.

Farther down the shaft, we saw two men with a massive power drill. They were wearing goggles but no face masks, and were covered from helmet to boot in a thick layer of rock dust. They were drilling into the end of the shaft to test for mineral quality and extend the tunnel farther into the heart of Cerro Rico. Did they want a bag of explosives? Did I want to see them work?

They fired up the motor, and the driller lifted the machine into place while his assistant took charge of water and power lines feeding the drill. As soon as the drill made contact with the

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rock, the noise was deafening and the dust began to fly. I tried to tough it out, but my senses were overwhelmed: I couldn't breathe or see anything. Reaching blindly for the wall, I felt my way backward, stumbling and bumping my helmet but moving toward clearer air. I stopped, ripped off my bandanna, now caked with rock dust, and crumpled to the muddy floor, coughing. Fecundo was there in no time patting me on the back and chuckling. "*Vamos*," he said. "Up a couple levels the breathing is better."

In a few minutes we found ourselves in a spacious chamber where the air seemed deliciously clean. There was a big winch with a cable going through a hole in the floor, and a few wheelbarrows lying around nearby. I was still trying to recover from the trauma of the power drill. I hadn't been able to tolerate the dust for even a few minutes, and I had my bandanna to filter the air. The drillers, much closer to the source of the rock powder, had no masks at all and, incredibly, appeared to be able to tolerate it all day, every day.

These miners, who numbered around 10,000 when I was there, work under conditions that can't have improved much since the Spanish colonial era. There were no bathrooms, no drinking water, no food. And at the shaft opening, where they dumped tons of mineral slag every day for sorting, I had seen numerous young boys hard at work—age is sometimes difficult to estimate in a different country, but they were prepubescent, of that I was sure.

I asked Fecundo how long men could survive in such dreadful conditions. "Silicosis. We all get silicosis," he answered. "The dust starts to destroy our lungs, and when enough is gone, we die. Miners who are lucky enough to avoid dying on the job in a tunnel collapse or from the gas in the shafts generally end up suffocating and coughing up their lungs once the silicosis nears 100 percent. Drillers like those guys you saw are young and tough; maybe they will keep that job for three years, four max. The drillers get paid the most, but they also get silicosis the fastest. If they're lucky, they'll live to 40."

The Bolivian left faces a familiar challenge: how, having won state power, to confront neoliberalism without stifling growth or civil liberties.

On my return trip to Bolivia four years later, I met a miner, an old-timer who, in light of this average life expectancy, had obviously been very fortunate. José Montesinos had retired to El Alto, the gritty working-class city up the mountain from La Paz, having survived more than thirty years working near Potosí. Tall by Bolivian standards despite a slouch, likely a result of years of stooping in the low tunnels, he was sprightly for his age.

José invited me to his house, a few blocks away, so that we could talk inside, protected from the chill of the Andean wind. It was a comfortable place but simple: made from concrete blocks and protected by an outer wall with broken glass bottles wedged into the top—a security arrangement common throughout Latin America.

I took a seat while José's wife went to get us each a glass of soda. A clock on the wall featured a painting of Jesus' face, and a small television in the corner was playing music videos, including Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise." It was the last place I expected to see a 1990s rap video.

José told me he had been born in 1936 in Tupiza, near Potosí, and began mining late, when he was 19. He spent most of his career working in the mines and helping to organize the miners' union. Then, in the mid-'80s, with mineral prices collapsing worldwide, Bolivia and its crucial mining sector fell into crisis. Bolivia became a classic example of the way neoliberalism was shoved down Latin Americans' throats.

Jeffrey Sachs, now a famed economist and onetime adviser to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, drew up a plan that epitomized the term "shock therapy." The plan became law, thanks largely to the efforts of then–Planning Minister Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, later elected twice to Bolivia's presidency before being driven out of the country by popular protests in the middle of his second term in 2003. The plan prioritized Bolivia's debt payments to foreign creditors like the IMF, slashed trade tariffs, froze public sector salaries and cleared the way for privatization of key industries, including mining.

"They wanted to break our unions, and firing tens of thousands of miners was a good way to do it," José lamented. "Miners were organized, our union members were mostly from radical left political parties and we had a sense of solidarity with one another and with the country as a whole." After Sachs's plan went into effect, the state-owned mining corporation, Comibol, shut down hundreds of mines, and for an opening salvo fired some 25,000 workers. According to José, more than 40,000 additional *mineros* lost their jobs in the next few years. "As a union organizer," José explained, "I was one of the first to go."

"We have a saying," José continued: "*Sangre de minero, semilla de guerrillero*." The rhyme is lost in translation: "The miner's blood is the seed of the guerrilla." I thought for a bit about Bolivian history but couldn't grasp what he was getting at. The country has never seen extensive guerrilla warfare, despite widespread and perpetual political instability. "I don't understand," I said eventually, uncomfortable that perhaps I was taking his words too literally. "Did some of you go on to form guerrilla organizations?"

The old man chuckled and told me gently that I was missing the point. He explained that after 1985 tens of thousands of Bolivian miners, including him, had no choice but to migrate from the mines in search of a new life for themselves and their families. A few went to other countries in search of work, but most went to the *campo* and became farmers, especially of coca in the Chapare region, or moved into cities, mostly to the rapidly growing El Alto. What was crucial, José told me, was that even as "the new economic plan succeeded in destroying

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organized labor in the mining industry, it also spread the seeds of future political movements, including those that would carry Evo to the presidency."

When Evo Morales was elected in 2005, it wasn't just the active miners like my friend Fecundo in Potosí who supported him but also most of the 700,000 people in the neighborhood associations of El Alto, the estimated 40,000 *cocaleros* in the Chapare region, and other groups across the country. Ex-miners, José explained, were a critical part of the leadership of these organizations, and the solidarity and discipline that had been forged when they were in the mines was critical to Morales's electoral success.

At the time of my conversation with José, the Bolivian people and their government were immersed in heated debates over issues such as the control of the nation's gas reserves, the imposition of coca production limits and tax hikes on the mining sector, as the government expanded its own mining operations in a renationalization of sorts. In these discussions, the left was confronting challenges similar to those faced by progressive movements across the region: namely, how to win legitimate authority and how, having succeeded, to confront the legacy of neoliberalism without stifling economic growth or civil liberties.

In Bolivia, I realized I was witnessing a country undergoing a revolution, and one that was largely peaceful. But it was equally evident that great strains attached to this. Morales owed his election victory to a range of social movements throughout the country. He had found that repaying their support and being loyal to his roots were not easy. Today, while he remains a popular president, some among his base are dissatisfied because the neoliberal structure of the state remains largely intact. I have heard Bolivians say, "We elected Evo to do away with it, and now he's governing it."

When grassroots leaders enter government, their organizations are deprived of leadership, and activists who have dedicated their lives to fighting power often find themselves co-opted by it. The problem is not unique to Bolivia: all over Latin America, when social movements focus their energy on electoral outcomes, they often lose even when they win. But if they ignore the electoral arena, they severely limit their ability to influence state policy and thus lose control over vital areas of their daily lives. This is a dilemma at the heart of radical organizing throughout Latin America, where left electoral strategies have enjoyed extensive success over the past decade. It has not yet been resolved, but the debates around it are relevant for progressives everywhere, including in the United States.

As José put it to me that afternoon in his living room in El Alto, "For as long as I can remember, the United States has sent expert advisers to guide our presidents and our national policy. Now, perhaps, it is time for your country to learn from us." ■

When Pirates Attack

The Cost of Doing Business

by RICHARD POLLAK

The Navy's daring rescue of Richard Phillips, kidnapped captain of the Maersk Alabama, drew such media trumpeting and general cheering around the globe that readers and viewers may be excused for thinking modern-day piracy is something new. Actually, all that's new is the boldness of the well-armed Somali corsairs and, in the case of Phillips's 17,000-ton container ship, the fact that the flag and the captain were American. Until now, piracy has never been a big story here or abroad because most ship owners, as well as their cargo clients and insurance companies, have played it down, willingly paying multimillion-dollar ransoms for the return of hijacked vessels and placing their crews in harm's way because the financial cost of piracy is far less than that of protecting the ships.

Although pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden, where the Maersk Alabama was seized, have surged dramatically in the past year, such incidents have been on the rise for decades—especially in the South China Sea, in the Strait of Malacca between Indonesia and Malaysia, and off the Horn of Africa. According to the Piracy Reporting Centre (PRC) of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), between 2000 and 2006 more than 2,400 acts of piracy took place around the world. For 2008 the PRC reported unprecedented totals: "49 vessels were hijacked, 889 crew taken hostage and a further 46 vessels reported being fired upon. A total of 32 crew members were

JON RASMUSSEN/AP PHOTO

A US Navy team tows the lifeboat where Somali pirates held Capt. Richard Phillips captive.

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injured, 11 killed and 21 missing—presumed dead. Guns were used in 139 incidents, up from 72 in 2007."

These numbers tell only half the story. The IMB estimates that more than half of attacks go unreported, especially the many hit-and-run jobs where boarders make off with the crew's cash, cameras, laptops, DVD players and occasionally the captain's safe. Ship owners avoid revealing the assaults to authorities because doing so risks a hike in insurance premiums and brings on tedious investigations in the nearest port, which may or may not be on the ship's route. Better to avoid costly delays and endless paperwork and keep the shippers happy by moving their cargo full speed ahead to the store shelves.

No reliable statistics measure the annual cost of piracy, but one likely high estimate of $16 billion represents only .001 percent of the more than $14 trillion in world trade that moved by ship last year. Much of this fraction is covered by insurance, so the Maersks and Wal-Marts have easily written off the ransoms and even the occasional loss of ships and cargoes worth tens of millions of dollars as the cost of doing business.

The human victims have long been expendable. Thousands of crew members, usually poor and nonwhite, serve on container ships, tankers and bulk carriers for as long as a year at a time, with almost no time off. When pirates manage to clamber aboard, these underpaid, perpetually exhausted men are always terrorized, frequently injured and sometimes set adrift in lifeboats or murdered outright on deck and dumped into the sea.

Now that the Somali pirates have grabbed the world's attention, the cry has gone up for the navies of developed nations to increase their presence in the waters off Somalia or even for the US military to take out the pirates on land. Military action can be successful, as the Navy marksmen demonstrated by killing three pirates to free Captain Phillips. But the Somali buccaneers write that off as *their* cost of doing business, a criminal enterprise that brings millions of dollars to the economy of an outlaw land with few other resources. Within hours of the Phillips rescue, Somali pirates had attacked at least four other ships in the Gulf and were promising to take revenge on Americans for the deaths of their comrades.

After the Maersk Alabama incident, an executive of the Danish conglomerate said, "Our main concern is always the safety and security of our crews." But for years Maersk and most other shipping firms, large and small, have refused to spend the money it would take to make each vessel more secure. Few, for example, have invested in Secure-Ship, an electrified wire fence that delivers a 9,000-volt nonlethal shock to anyone attempting to climb aboard.

There are other tactics merchant ships could employ to reduce piracy, from placing private armed teams aboard during passage through dangerous waters to avoiding those waters altogether. These and other safety strategies would doubtless cost a lot of money, but until the shipping community abandons its pinch-penny cynicism, piracy off the coast of Somalia is certain to grow and to encourage brigands elsewhere.

Richard Pollak, a Nation *contributing editor, is the author, most recently, of* The Colombo Bay, *about a voyage he took on that container ship from Hong Kong to New York via the Suez Canal in the weeks after 9/11.*

Misreading the Somali Threat

by KAREN ROTHMYER

Nairobi

In the days after the Maersk Alabama was attacked by Somali pirates, the papers here were full of news about the incident. Many letter writers praised the cargo ship's captain, Richard Phillips, for volunteering to be a hostage in exchange for his crew's safety, with one commenting that he wished Kenya's feuding leaders would draw a lesson "and put the interests of the country before their own." Others expressed the hope that the United States will work to eliminate the pirate menace, noting how close Somalia is to Kenya. No one, however, has proposed military action against Somalia.

That was left to US hawks, who—conflating piracy, the militant Somali group Al Shabab and Al Qaeda—swiftly turned the attack into a new excuse for extending the "war on terror" to this corner of Africa. John Bolton, former ambassador to the United Nations, called for an invasion as "the prudential response" to piracy, while the Heritage Foundation's James Carafano argued for "going into Somalia and rooting out the [pirate] bases." Former FBI interrogator Ali Soufan maintained in the *Wall Street Journal* that if Al Qaeda mounts another successful attack, "there is a strong chance it will be linked to Somalia."

The Obama administration's response to Somali piracy—and the strategy it develops to deal with Al Shabab—will be a crucial test of whether the neocon worldview retains any traction. So far the signals are frustratingly mixed. On the one hand, Defense Secretary Robert Gates's coolheaded comments in the wake of the attack signaled that the administration has thrown off the Bush-era lens and sees the world as the messy and complicated place that it is. On April 13 Gates explained that "there is no purely military solution" to the threat of piracy and suggested that the best strategy for dealing with hijackers like those who captured the Maersk Alabama—whom he described as "untrained teenagers with heavy weapons"—was to improve governance and economic stability. On the other hand, if a front-page April 11 *Washington Post* story is to be believed, even before the piracy incident administration officials were paying respectful attention to defense officials' recommendations to pre-emptively strike Al Shabab training camps "based on the potential threat the group poses to American interests."

What worries me in particular is the ease with which Americans who should know better are buying into the claim that Al Shabab is working closely with Al Qaeda—a contention reminiscent of the repeated charge that Saddam Hussein was in league with Osama bin Laden. The *Washington Post* story, for example, spoke flatly of the "ties between [Al Shabab's] leaders and al-Qaeda." Reuters, by contrast, carefully referred to Al Shabab on March 19 as a group that "Washington accuses of having close ties to al Qaeda." Al Shabab denies organizational links to Al Qaeda, though in a March 3 interview with Al Jazeera (as reported by Purdue professor Michael Weinstein), its spokesman said the group shares Al Qaeda's goals of implementing Sharia, uniting Islamic countries and "restoring the Caliphate."

Sitting here in Nairobi, in a country grappling with ethnic

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tensions and an estimated 40 percent unemployment rate, the question of just what the Obama administration believes about piracy and terrorism in Somalia is not academic. Somalia is Kenya's neighbor, and even the few US bombing runs into the country to date, targeting alleged Al Qaeda operatives, have resulted in a huge influx of Somali refugees. Kenya's Dadaab refugee center is home to an estimated 250,000 people, while the population of the area of Nairobi known—not affectionately—as Little Mogadishu has swelled with illegal immigrants.

One friend of mine here, an Ethiopian by birth, is gloomy about Obama's ability to resist the hawks' demands. He says that Obama, being new and black, is under great pressure to prove his military credentials. There's no way to do that, he says, in either Afghanistan or Iraq. Somalia, in contrast, offers a chance to define and fight his "own" war. My concerns rest more with the ambitions of Africom, the Pentagon command for Africa, which has been warmly endorsed by several of Obama's top advisers. Despite general distrust of Africom throughout the continent, former Ambassador to Tanzania Charles Stith blithely wrote in the *Boston Globe* that "while Africom has met some resistance, this latest hostage-taking involving an American might be just the opportunity to jump-start conversations about how Africom might be more effectively engaged." Yes, and just the ticket to career advancement for a young Africom officer.

An African proverb says, "When the elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers." Those of us who are Somalia's neighbors can only hope that if the American elephant decides to start something, we won't get stepped on.

Karen Rothmyer (karen.rothmyer@gmail.com), a Nation Institute fellow, teaches journalism at the University of Nairobi.

Letters

(continued from page 2)

East Moriches, N.Y.

At 61, I read a newspaper. But I think newspapers should die. Why not have a few national papers staffed by an elite group of writers, covering national and international issues?

Richard Sapienza

Johnstown, N.Y.

Nichols and McChesney's article reads like my own obituary, if not the country's. But I do not think the print paper is dead, nor can we expect government subsidies. If the *Chronicle* fails, I expect ten small papers to be born in San Francisco. They will be reader-specific and small. They might concentrate on gay news, sports, the arts, neighborhoods, the elderly. If you can live with a 5,000 circulation, you can succeed. Keep it local, keep it lively, keep it inexpensive and you'll keep printing.

David Childs

Concrete, Wash.

In our area an old local paper is back in print to deal with local issues. The world is becoming local and global. I can access news from any source. The Internet is making real democracy possible.

Jason Miller, *publisher-editor*
Concrete Herald

Endicott, N.Y.

Under private or public (or both) umbrellas, why not develop four national regional papers with the best journalists available, while the states and/or counties develop their own versions of this format? This could be done in conjunction with state universities, which could help with costs and resources. They could develop more involved journalism, and that might draw young people back into the process.

James Palombo

Bellevue, Wash.

The authors propose using government subsidies to fund an independent press. But how can we persuade the public and lawmakers to pay for it? It's difficult enough persuading the public to pay for programs like education. And progressives want to fund not just journalism but also healthcare, public transportation, elections and green energy. Conservatives have been brilliant at demonizing government and at raising citizens' ire about taxes. Progressives need to do a better job of marketing the idea of government as a source of good and the merits of progressive taxation.

Donald A. Smith

Oneonta, N.Y.

Here's an idea for saving America's newspapers: allow newspapers that have had to cease operations to be restructured as not-for-profits under the leadership of the former employees, with allied community backing. Obviously, it would have to be a special designation that establishes management guidelines and limits on a paper's external advertising revenues.

Albert L. Colone

Olney, Md.

I am an avid reader of newspapers and regret the demise of the reporting they used to do. But they abandoned true journalism long ago, and there are so many other and better sources of news on the Internet. I get my news from British sources: the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, the *Times* of London and the BBC. They still provide real journalism.

Susan Nerlinger

Seattle

Nichols and McChesney nicely dissect key problems of journalism and the need for public money as a remedy. Years ago Beth Sanders and I, in *Fear and Favor in the Newsroom*, put forward the idea of giving every adult a federal credit of $150 to direct to the nonprofit media organization of his/her choice (an idea borrowed from economist Dean Baker's artistic-freedom voucher proposal). We proposed that the money be confined to nonprofit media because the corporate media are the problem (for every Juan González, there are dozens of Judith Millers). Despite their tiny size, nonprofit media like Pacifica Radio and *Mother Jones* expose the lies and half-truths on which most public policy is based.

Randy Baker

Seattle

I can stand to straddle both print and Internet, but newspaper reporting took a turn for the worse when corporate ownership killed off news in favor of infotainment. My father was a newspaper writer all his life. His paper was bought by Rupert Murdoch. I remember one day he had his coffee and the new, condensed, sound-bite-filled rag he used to write for in front of him. He looked up, shaking his head, and said, "This… is not a newspaper."

Barbara Molloy-Olund

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Books & the Arts.

ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

When the Whip Comes Down

by WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

The culture has caught up with Mary Gaitskill, and she's not happy about it. "Things are not like they once were," a journalist says in *Don't Cry*, an awkwardly self-conscious new collection that seems to represent something of an artistic midlife crisis. "*Sex and the City* is on TV." The journalist is thinking about a famous "feminist author" who writes about pornography and prostitution with a television glibness that fails to acknowledge the "darkness and mystery" that lies between "intelligent words on one side, and mute genitals on the other." The author is a kind of anti- or counter-Gaitskill, the sort of writer she's worried we might mistake her for. "The feminist author…read her disturbing stories as if she were a lady at a tea party, as if there were no mystery, no darkness, just her, the feminist author skipping along, swinging some charming little bag, and singing about penises, la la la la la!"

When Gaitskill published her first collection, *Bad Behavior*, in 1988, sex, in the city or otherwise, was most certainly not on TV. Her blunt stories of prostitution, sadomasochism and other flavors of sexual degradation came as a lash to the cultural system. ("A book that was like a little box with monsters inside it," she calls the volume at an autobiographical moment in the new collection. One story, "Secretary," was committed to film, but only many years later and only in what Gaitskill has called "the 'Pretty Woman' version.") In other respects, the book arrived right on time. As Ariel Levy noted recently in *The New Yorker*, feminism had passed in the 1980s from the era of egalitarianism, consciousness-raising and nurture to a harder-edged embrace of lust and power, a desire to appropriate rather than abjure stereotypically masculine energies, that was exemplified by S&M. *On Our Backs*, the first women's sex magazine, debuted in 1984. *Herotica*, the initial book in what became a long-running series, came out in 1988, the same year as *Bad Behavior*.

If women's relationship to sex was changing, so was sex itself. The sexual revolution had flown the flag of freedom, self-expression and guiltless pleasure: *The Joy of Sex* and *The Sensuous Woman*, Norman O. Brown and

Don't Cry
By Mary Gaitskill.
Pantheon. 226 pp. $23.95.

William Deresiewicz is a Nation *contributing writer. He has been nominated for a 2009 National Magazine Award for reviews and criticism.*

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the almighty Pill, hippies, swingers, vibrators, orgies, "free love" and the zipless fuck. Sex was fun, sex was wholesome, sex was natural. By the late '80s, things had long since ceased to be so simple, and not just because of AIDS. *Two Girls, Fat and Thin*, Gaitskill's second book and first novel, published three years after *Bad Behavior*, made the connection between what was happening in the bedroom and what was happening in the country. Sadomasochism became the master metaphor for human relations in the Ayn Randian dystopia of Reagan's America, a landscape of domination and persecution, littered with the broken and the homeless, where the ideology is winner-take-all and the only rule is fuck or be fucked.

Gaitskill's characters have blind spots where their personalities are supposed to be.

Sex, like everything else, was now about power. *Two Girls* is a novel of the '80s and a novel of New York; the psychic relations that Gaitskill had made her subject she saw inscribed all over the city, written on its faces and its streets.

A second collection, *Because They Wanted To*, appeared in 1997. Taken together, Gaitskill's first three books established a tightly coherent vision expressed through a narrow but powerful array of themes and techniques. For Gaitskill, Rand and Reagan are only extreme expressions of a universal condition, and the social world itself is a Hobbesian jungle of the hideous, the merciless and the weak. Its paradigm and training ground is childhood, which Gaitskill returns to throughout these three books as if it were a wound she can't stop licking:

> The assigned classroom was filled with murderously aggressive boys and rigid girls with animal eyes who threw spitballs, punched each other, snarled, whispered, and stared one another down. And shadowing all these gestures and movements were declarations of dominance, of territory, the swift, blind play of power and weakness.

Given such conditions, the only viable strategy is to bury your feelings as deeply as possible. In *Two Girls*, the most despised of the classroom outcasts is nicknamed "'Emotional,' the worst insult imaginable": "Every answer seemed to come out of some horrible complex individuality reeking with humanity, the clarity and trust in her soft voice made them squirm with discomfort."

The result is at once self-enclosure and self-alienation. Gaitskill's characters are young women and men set adrift between adolescence and adulthood, members-in-training of the so-called creative class, like so many of us are or once were. They hole up in cruddy apartments, work demeaning jobs and nurse vague creative aspirations while making the desultory round of bars, clubs and parties in the demimonde of urban hipsterdom. But Gaitskill gives her characters a larger than ordinary allotment of psychic distress. It doesn't matter if childhood trauma figures explicitly in their stories; with their stunted or fragile or provisional selves, their baffled craving for comfort, they are all still damaged children. Their predicament creates a suffocating compound of psychological pressure and emotional desiccation, along with a lurking sense of threat that originates not in the outside world but in the hidden places of the psyche, in the violence that unacknowledged desires are capable of calling down. Gaitskill's characters have a blind spot where their personalities are supposed to be, and it's staring at the back of their heads. They can't feel what they feel or want what they want. They aren't struggling, like their peers, to decide what to be; they're trying to figure out who they are.

Needless to say, they have even more trouble making contact with other people. Gaitskill's characters spend most of the time in their own heads: imagining, picturing, fantasizing, dreaming—rearranging reality, like a child playing with dolls, into manageable scenarios. "He could feel his eyes become clouded with privacy as he slipped discreetly into a sheltering cave of sexual fantasy." "She imagined Leisha as an actress in a sci-fi movie.... As a mother in a blue-and-white checked blouse.... As an aging hipster in a bar.... As a bag lady." When contact comes between such heavily defended souls, it takes the form of penetration, physical or psychological. One of Gaitskill's characters falls in love with a dentist and fantasizes about having her labia pierced with needles. Another violates her playmate with a toothbrush. Abjection and humiliation become the nearest tolerable approaches to intimacy. "I feel too vulnerable" for sex, one woman says. "I just want somebody to hurt me and humiliate me." Role-play—fantasy projected outward, a kind of psychological bondage—defuses the disruptive potential of sex and love. "You're so sweet," the same character tells a lover. "I just want to tie you up and torture you." The palliation is inevitably transient. Gaitskill's stories typically end with the breaking off of contact, the protagonist returning alone to her empty, safe apartment.

Given the obsessive quality of Gaitskill's thematic focus, it is hard not to read her work as psychic self-portraiture. Like a number of her characters, Gaitskill left home at 16, went to the University of Michigan, worked as a stripper and prostitute, experienced sexual violation, spent time in a mental institution, lived in New York and San Francisco. *Bad Behavior* didn't appear until she was 33, many years into her own apprenticeship in anomie. An autobiographical story in the new collection describes the period of the book's composition as "five dreary years...in a tiny apartment with a sink and a stove against one wall and a mattress against the other.... I neglected my family. I forgot how to talk to people."

The shock value of Gaitskill's early work comes from the fact that she dared to write about her psychological situation; its artistic value comes from the fact that she figured out how to express it in a style. The substructure of her prose consists of a minute attention to physical and social detail that bespeaks an outsider's hooded, vengeful observation: "His eyes and nose were arrogant and ignorant, his mouth was sensual and nervous, wanting to please. But his forehead was powerful, discerning, and strange." The acuity is remarkable, but the description also functions as an act of imaginative dismemberment and dehumanization. As the title of *Two Girls, Fat and Thin* suggests, Gaitskill's gimlet eye exposes and persecutes ugliness and imperfection like the worst locker-room tyrant: "He turned the edge of one nostril over with his thumb and nervously stroked his nose hairs with one finger." (A culture that worships beauty will spawn a countervailing literature of ugliness, as the author of *Brief Interviews With Hideous Men* also understood.) The relentless attention to bodily squalor is humiliating, punitive, sadistic. The tone is cold, detached—almost all of Gaitskill's early stories are written in the third person—the syntax probes and penetrates like a dental drill. Defenses are stripped, secrets revealed, hidden places touched. Her titles are sarcastic: "A Romantic Weekend," "Something Nice," "Comfort." Gaitskill, like her characters, is a deviser of scenarios, and no more merciful than they to her Barbies and Kens.

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The effect is of a writer simultaneously occupying both sides of the sadomasochistic dynamic, inflicting pain, white-lipped, on her own alter egos. She is the whip, and she is also the cringing flesh. Again, the psychological condition, infused with urgency, carries over into the fiction, this time at the level of structure. Gaitskill's stories typically involve some kind of psychic division. The title of *Two Girls* is again representative. Gaitskill is the fat outcast, and she is also the neurotic young writer who pursues her. Other narratives dramatize acts of compartmentalization or disassociation. In one, an arty young woman moonlights as a prostitute, stepping out of the world of galleries and name-dropping and into a different persona. Still other stories juxtapose a pair of young women, usually embittered ex-friends, as if to suggest that each represents a version of the other. And many of Gaitskill's narratives, including *Two Girls*, revolve around a temporal split, the past unfolding in memory as the protagonist thinks back to an earlier, different self.

By writing so close to the bone, Gaitskill brought to her early fiction a remarkable force of immediacy and psychological penetration. This is her greatness as a writer. Her premises are repetitive, her range of characters limited, her plotting unambitious. The genius of her work is all in the details. "I didn't even enjoy [my mother's] stroking; I devoured it with feverish passivity, my mind lunging forward ahead of her fingers to consume her touch before it came." This is experience rendered as it really is, not as we smooth it over in our minds. "It was fun to say that I liked something refined and cruel," thinks a woman swapping fantasies with friends, "but under the fun was an impatient yank of boredom and under that was indignation and pain." All is subtext for Gaitskill, the real messages we pass back and forth beneath the social dumb show. "[Her mother] did talk to her about being 'nice' in reference to boys and to bullying other kids, but Justine understood from her tone of voice that 'nice' had nothing to do with what anybody really felt or thought or observed but was something everybody had to pretend."

And always, with Gaitskill, it is the body, the seat of our souls and the shape of our fate, that speaks the loudest. "It was a dark bar with heavy air, tended and frequented mainly by old men whose personalities seemed to have drained from their upper bodies and become lodged in their buttocks and thighs." Gaitskill reads the body like a doctor feeling for organs. "I had sensed it when I put my hand on his midsection; it had felt angry, and bitterly wounded, but also vigilant, dignified, and determined to preserve its form." Nothing is lost on her; nobody is what they pretend to be; everything in the human world is saturated with meanings. Good writers show us new places. Great writers give us new ways of looking at the old one. Just as Ruskin enabled a generation of Europeans to see the landscape that was actually in front of them rather than the conventionalized approximations they carried around in their heads, so is Gaitskill one of those rare artists who can endow us with braver, more vigilant senses. You step out of her books and into a whole new world.

Gaitskill is one of those rare artists who can endow us with braver, more vigilant senses.

Veronica, a novel that appeared four years ago to great acclaim, marks both the summit of Gaitskill's work to date and the first stages of what looks thus far like decline. The point of inflection can be specified precisely: it is the moment Veronica enters the story, exactly halfway through. Until then the novel has all belonged to Alison, a Gaitskillian vagabond typical in all ways but this: she is completely gorgeous. After a stint as a San Francisco runaway, Alison is plucked from her drab New Jersey home and set down in the erogenous zones of Parisian high fashion—to walk the runways, live the life and show the world the face of its dreams.

But *Veronica* is something more than the Gaitskillian world on club music and coke, a gilded edition of squalor. It also does something completely new. You can feel it right from the start, in the novel's nervous system, which is to say, its syntax. The sentences are shorter, the rhythms franker and more direct. Gone are the neurotic complications of syntax, the anxious poking and probing. A calm center anchors the swirl of perception, as if Gaitskill's voice had settled down from her throat into her belly. You wouldn't think her writing could have gotten any more immediate than it already was, but the old immediacy was one of description, an analytic clarity untouched by what it sees. Here she feels directly implicated, and we feel it along with her.

The key change involves the novel's point of view. *Veronica* is narrated in the first person, by Alison. Alison is something unprecedented in Gaitskill's work, a character who fully integrates her creator's personality. Despite the fact that the novel again revolves around the relationship between two women, it is not another instance of self-division. Veronica is not a dimension of Gaitskill's soul, and leaves Alison in full command of its energies. The X-ray vision is still there, but it is wedded to a new warmth, and the combination raises Gaitskill's prose to a level of lyric intensity she sustains for dozens of pages at a stretch. Paragraphs unfold like poems, like journeys, like presents you unwrap one sentence at a time. This one describes a fellow model:

> On the runway, she was a bolt of lightning in a white Chanel dress. She turned and gave a look. Thumping music took you into the lower body, where the valves and pistons were working. You caught a dark whiff of shit, the sweetness of cherries, and the laughter of girls. Like lightning, the contrast cut down the center of the earth: We all eat and shit, screw and die. But here is Beauty in a white dress. Here is the pumping music, grinding her into meat and dirt. Here are the other girls coming in waves to refill Beauty's slot. And here is little Alana, shrugging and turning away.

But then Veronica arrives, and the whole thing shifts. Alison meets the older woman while temping during a dead spot in her career. Veronica is 37: tart, proud, lurid, aging, absurd, with a smile like a badly healed wound. We're back to New York in the '80s. Veronica's friends are gay men, and her lover is bisexual. Before long she has AIDS, and the rest of the novel narrates Alison's first grudging, then repentant efforts to love her before she dies. But here Gaitskill drifts out of her depth, into realms of experience—compassion, redemption, transcendence—she doesn't intuitively grasp or know how to represent. Alison's transformation from spoiled teenage model to chastened older woman is more announced than shown. Even Veronica fails to come into focus, precisely because she is not a version of her creator. For all her observational acuity, Gaitskill has never displayed a capacity to inhabit the experiences of people significantly different from herself. (It is telling that the book is named after one woman but is really about the other.) The novel's temporal structure—

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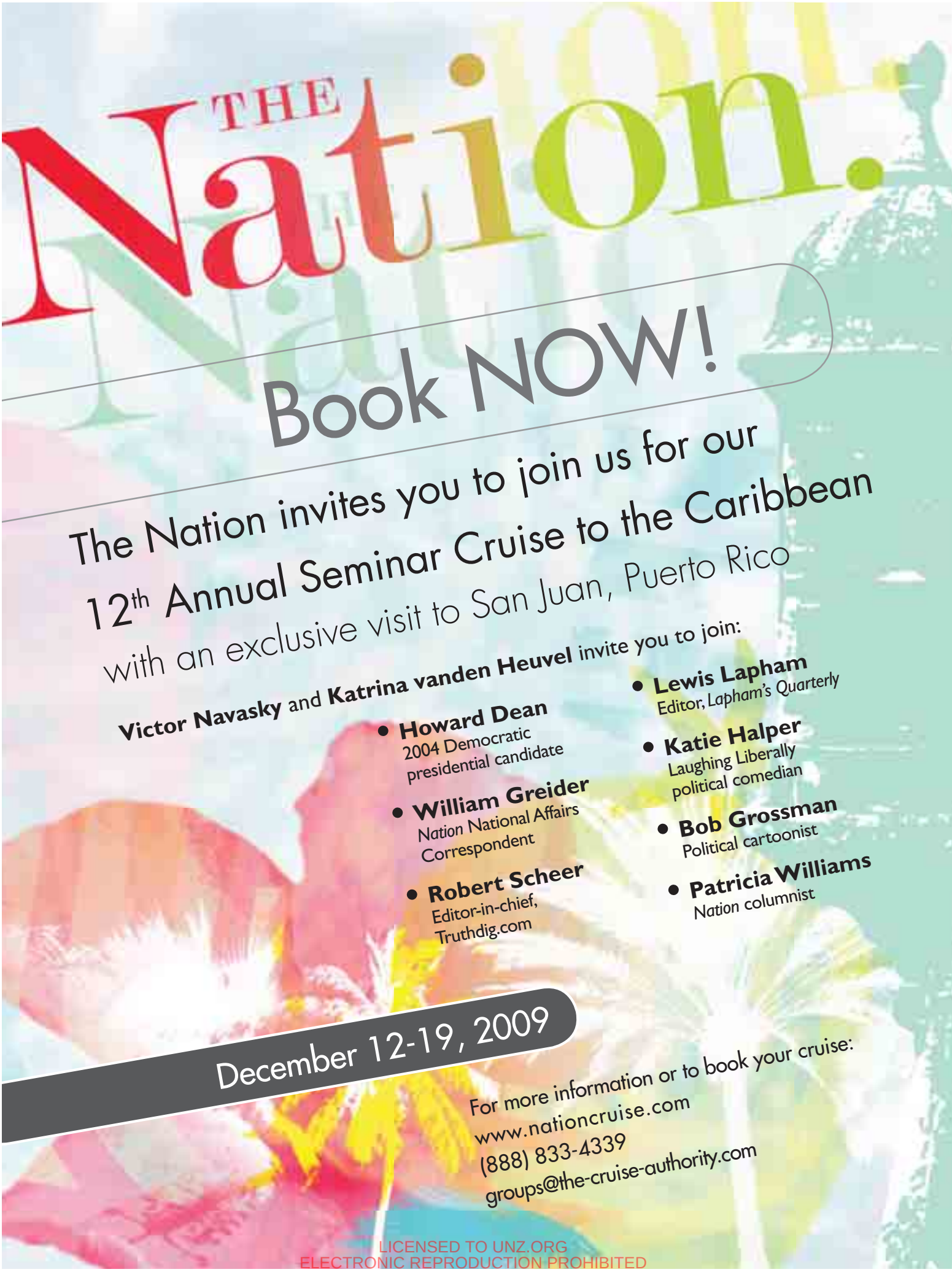

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Alison remembers Veronica's story from the vantage point of her own middle age, during a single walk in the woods—becomes so labored that even Gaitskill seems to tire of it. Most tellingly, the magic goes out of the prose. By the end, the novel is making vague, mystical gestures that we're meant to take for wisdom.

The new collection extends the downward trajectory. The most striking thing about *Don't Cry* is how miscellaneous it is: the autobiographical story; the story about the "feminist author," which feels like an essay in disguise; a couple of classically Gaitskillian scenarios; a pair of linked narratives; a meditation on three imaginary news items; an exercise in point of view; an allegory—the volume seems to spend its length searching for direction. Old themes like sexuality and identity are taken out for another trot; new ones like maternity and connectedness are haltingly attempted. There is much discussion about the nature of writing but a surprising dearth of verbal energy. The volume seems to come from a writer who is no longer clear about what she wants to say or how she wants to say it.

Psychological dynamics once portrayed with subtlety have now hardened into a theory.

A disabling self-consciousness appears to have crept into Gaitskill's work. The allegory, "Mirror Ball," exemplifies the problem. The premise is familiar: two young hipsters dealing with the emotional fallout of a one-night stand. But Gaitskill chooses to render the situation in symbolic terms that drain it of life. The boy, we're told, has stolen a part of the girl's soul, the part that "was joined with Ardor, and it compelled… the part of his soul that was joined with Hunger." The girl's soul-part gets trapped in the depths of the boy with the soul-parts of the other girls he's slept with (Gentleness, Forbearance, Instinct), all of them circling the walls of the prison where half of the boy's own soul got trapped when he was 2, on account of a withholding mother. And so forth. The whole thing sounds like *The Pilgrim's Progress* as retold by Dr. Phil. The psychological dynamics Gaitskill once portrayed with such subtlety and plasticity have now hardened into a theory.

The theory involves a kind of sexualized cosmology. Its central image is that of a hole or shaft, "dark and deep as the pit of the earth. At the bottom of it ran boiling rivers of Male and Female" bearing "raw matter" and "primary force." This is the female anatomy raised to a metaphysical first principle. At the same time, it is precisely "because she has the open part" that this "hell of shapeshifting and destruction"—"the deep place of sex"—is especially dangerous for a woman. "She needs rules, structures, intact shapes to make sure the openness doesn't get *too* open." "For a man, it is different.… He can walk triumphant in a place of no place." Some of this is clear enough, some of it is pretty opaque, but the whole thing appears to constitute a private theology that has replaced the kind of intuitive exploration that Gaitskill once did so well.

I don't use the religious term lightly. *Veronica* culminates in some fairly woolly mysticism about how the title character is received after death into the arms of "Love," plus a dream vision in which she ascends to heaven perfected in body and soul. *Don't Cry* ends with an even clearer gesture toward the miraculous. The last, titular story, also told in the first person, concerns a trip the narrator takes to Ethiopia to help a friend find a baby to adopt. The narrator's husband has died recently, and she wears their wedding rings on a chain around her neck. At the story's climax, the rings are stolen by a street thief. As the narrator weeps helplessly in the middle of the lane, a "very small old man" appears before her. "Stop," he says. "Don't cry." And then he places the rings in her hand. The implications are clear. The lost will be found, the grieving comforted, the broken made whole.

This kind of sentimentalism, if not this kind of mystery-mongering, is frequent in the new collection. A boy without a father is solaced in an airport (the gateway to heaven, as it were) by a mother estranged from her children. Another mother puts her daughter to sleep while thinking of the wisdom that children have to teach. (Let's hope the girl never meets any of the kids in Gaitskill's earlier books.) Two women, intermittent lovers, draw closer through their encounters. The new mood extends to matters of form. Gaitskill has always made a practice of leaving her stories proudly unresolved. Here we're treated to conclusions, benedictions, even epiphanies.

All this would be fine if the new stories were as good as the old ones, but they're not even close. The pieces that predate *Veronica* show flashes of the old brilliance (the stories are presented in roughly the order in which they were published in magazine form), but the later ones appear to belong to a writer who no longer even remembers what she could once do. Gaitskill has taught creative writing for many years, and it seems like her students have started to rub off on her. One story, "Description," actually reads like a parody of the kind of thing that gets produced in MFA programs, especially given the title and the fact that the characters have just graduated from one. The same mundane premise ("Joseph and his friend Kevin were driving to New Paltz for a hike"), the same flat language, the same kind of culminating recognition ("Kevin would always win. That's just how it was").

The trouble is, it follows an even broader piece of work. "The Arms and Legs of the Lake" offers a triple dose of writing-seminar clichés. It is topical in a facile way, it plays around with point of view and it carries one of those wistfully symbolic titles. The story not only shows how shallow Gaitskill's engagement with history has become; it exposes her inability to imagine minds unlike her own even more painfully than *Veronica*. A mentally unbalanced Iraq War veteran is taking a train home for Mother's Day, and the story's perspective bounces around among the passengers in the car. The interior monologues are priceless. A guilty liberal: "This man has been damaged by the war, but still he is profound. He will not scorn my support because I'm white." A World War II vet: "Anyone, *anyone* who knew what war was should be respected by those who didn't. Perkins knew. It was long ago, but still he knew.…" Gaitskill even attempts a little blackface: "He talks like he a killah, but he a *baby*, and everybody knows it." We end up back with the Iraq veteran for a whiff of childhood reminiscence that sounds like a bad imitation of Benjy Compson.

It's a familiar tale. A young writer pours her agonies of soul into work of uncompromising honesty. She stares into an abyss of pain so that we may see the truth. But few have the energy to sustain such effort indefinitely. Eventually, the spirit seeks rest—seeks comfort, seeks consolation, seeks peace. It happened to Wordsworth and Conrad, and now it seems to be happening to Mary Gaitskill. The hunger has gone out of her work. Gaitskill was a great poet of youthful suffering. Whether she can reinvent herself as a chronicler of maturity remains to be seen. ■

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BACK TALK

ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

Peter Singer

Peter Singer, an applied ethicist, is one of the world's best-known philosophers. His new book, *The Life You Can Save* (Random House, $22), argues that it is ethically indefensible not to donate a certain portion of your wealth to NGOs and aid groups fighting extreme poverty around the world (thelifeyoucansave.com). Such inaction, he says, is like walking past a child drowning in a pond.

—Christine Smallwood

Why not institute a compulsory tax rather than rely on NGOs?

If you're asking about the United States, it's because the US is not very effective in its aid program. NGOs really do have a better record of working more with the grassroots, of not going through governments and not making the governments dependent on them. If we were in Sweden, maybe there would a better, less politically directed aid program where a compulsory tax might be a reasonable option.

Are vastly unequal distributions of global wealth ineradicable?

We don't have a better system of encouraging people to be productive in ways that are useful for others. In theory, if you were to sketch out, as people did in the nineteenth century, utopian blueprints of how our society should function, then obviously you would have a more equal distribution of wealth. But insofar as we've ever tried those things, they don't work. I don't think you can criticize people for being rich if what they have done is effectively produce things that people want or produce them more cheaply than other people have done. Those are good things to do. I don't see the problem with getting rich in the first place. I see a problem with getting rich and not seeing that as an opportunity to do an immense amount of good in the world. There's always going to be relative poverty. I don't think we're going to get rid of that, due to the nature of the system of production that we have. But I don't think there has to be this constant state where there are a billion people living in extreme poverty, even in countries that don't have terribly repressive governments.

How does one know when to stop giving?

That's the most difficult question. On the one hand, there's this very demanding implication of my original argument, that as long as I have something that's a luxury that I don't need and the money I spend on it could save a child's life, I should really keep giving until I don't spend anything on luxuries at all. I still see the pull of that argument. But it's also important to think about what we would achieve by setting that as the standard—we would not achieve nearly as much. In that sense, the answer is something like, we should give to the point where if others gave similarly, we would be able to more or less solve the problem. And we should feel OK if we reach that standard and encourage others to reach it, because that will produce the best results.

Why don't people give more than they do?

There are a lot of reasons. There are the psychological factors—people give to identifiable individuals more readily than they give to a statistical mass. Or they help when they fear that they alone are responsible rather than when responsibility is diffuse. They give when they believe that others are giving. And if they don't see others helping, not very many will do very much. But if we can change that perception, you could get a virtuous reinforcing spiral where people give because they see others are giving.

Is it better to send money abroad than to donate money to a local homeless shelter?

Your dollars go a lot further in developing countries. For $50 you can restore someone's sight in Eritrea; for $400 you can repair an obstetric fistula for a girl in Ethiopia. And I don't think these sorts of sums can do anything nearly as life-changing in our country. To help a homeless person on the streets of New York City is a long and complicated and quite expensive process, really.

You're a utilitarian. Utilitarianism tries to maximize the net surplus of happiness over misery in the world. What if billionaire Larry Ellison's yacht makes him really, really happy?

This is what some call the utility monster argument. We would have to assume that Larry Ellison actually has capacities for happiness that are vastly greater than anyone else's. Ellison's yacht cost $200 million, and if we assume that $400 can repair an obstetric fistula, that means that the suffering relieved by 500,000 obstetric fistula repairs is not greater than the happiness that Ellison gets from his yacht. That, I think, is not physically possible. But if we ever encountered Martians who could convince us that they had a vastly greater capacity for happiness than we do, then it could be a problem.

Then the moral position would be to let the Martians colonize Earth and make us their slaves.

Yes, that does seem to be the implication of the theory. A lot of people do think that's a damning objection to utilitarianism.

Does your standard of giving advocate a kind of asceticism?

Not for its own sake. Some forms of indulgence and expensive pleasures are difficult to justify in a world in which 27,000 children [younger than 5] die daily of forces you could help prevent. Maybe the amount of money that we're spending on symphony orchestras or buying a Duccio for the Met is not a good priority at the moment. But I would love there to be a world in which there weren't such urgent needs for our resources and we could say, OK, we've dealt with all those really urgent problems; now let's go back to enjoying our symphonies and our medieval paintings. ■

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Only Words

by GEORGE SCIALABBA

LEE PELLIGRINI

Alan Wolfe

The Future of Liberalism
By Alan Wolfe.
Knopf. 335 pp. $25.95.

A Tolerable Anarchy
Rebels, Reactionaries, and the Making of American Freedom.
By Jedediah Purdy.
Knopf. 294 pp. $23.95.

William F. Buckley Jr., if I recall correctly, once declared wearily that he was determined not to read another book vindicating liberalism or reflecting on its prospects until his grandmother wrote one. Old Billzebub may have been right, for once: liberals do seem peculiarly given to anxious self-examination and self-justification. Still, an uneasy conscience is better than no conscience, which has been the general rule among conservatives since 1980 at least. So let us attend, even if a little wearily, while Alan Wolfe and Jedediah Purdy examine contemporary liberalism's entrails and peer into its future.

Wolfe is a sociologist of religion and a prolific commentator on American politics and society. His best-known books, including *Moral Freedom* and *One Nation After All*, argue convincingly for the existence of a core American morality, compounded of civic virtue and muted, nonsectarian religiosity. He interviewed a great many ordinary people, listened to them sympathetically and perceptively and produced an account of contemporary American moral psychology that was at least as illuminating as the better-known *Habits of the Heart*.

Wolfe is a public intellectual as well as a scholar, a preacher as well as a scribe. *The Future of Liberalism* is not a work of intellectual history or political theory, nor is it exactly a sermon, much less a manifesto. Admonitory, authoritative, benign and bland, it resembles a pastoral letter, an encyclical from one of the bishops of the Church of Liberalism, American Synod. "Dearly beloved," it exhorts us, "lift up your hearts. Our fathers have set our feet upon the path of moderate righteousness. Therefore, let us shun extremism, straying neither to the left nor the right, but instead march together, at all deliberate speed, toward a better—though still necessarily imperfect—world."

In one respect, at least, *The Future of Liberalism* is wholly successful. Wolfe has found the perfect epigraph, an austere but luminous passage from a 1934 address by John Dewey titled "The Future of Liberalism." Because it expresses so well the fundamental premise of Wolfe's book, it is worth quoting in full:

> [Liberalism] knows that an individual is nothing fixed, given ready-made. [Individuality] is something achieved, and achieved not in isolation but with the aid and support of conditions, cultural and physical—including in "cultural," economic, legal and political institutions as well as science and art. Liberalism knows that social conditions may restrict, distort and almost prevent the development of individuality. It therefore takes an active interest in the working of social institutions that have a bearing, positive or negative, upon the growth of individuals who shall be rugged in fact and not merely in abstract theory. It is as much interested in the positive construction of favorable institutions, legal, political and economic, as it is in removing abuses and overt oppressions.

That liberalism is concerned with both positive and negative liberty, with develop-

George Scialabba is the author of Divided Mind *and* What Are Intellectuals Good For?

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ment as well as freedom—that in fact the traditional distinction between them is oversimplified and misleading—is Wolfe's guiding conception.

As he puts it in his first chapter, concerned with definitions: "The core substantive principle of liberalism is this: *As many people as possible should have as much say as is feasible over the direction their lives will take*." That means, on the one hand, open societies with no more than a necessary minimum of state coercion, and on the other hand, a guarantee of "sufficient economic security to individuals so that they are not dependent on the arbitrary will of others for the basic necessities of life." As this definition makes admirably clear, conservatives and libertarians are simply one-handed liberals, opposed to restraints on economic activity but unconcerned about those unable, for whatever reason, to take part in economic activity on equal terms.

Liberalism is committed to liberty and equality, Wolfe reminds us. When economic inequality is too great, the liberty of the less powerful is diminished. "The freedom to live your life on terms you establish does not mean very much if society is organized in such a way as to deny large numbers of people the possibility of ever realizing that objective." Freedom has material prerequisites. Liberals recognize this; laissez-faire conservatives don't, or don't care.

Wolfe's account of liberalism's substantive commitments is straightforward and persuasive—much the best part of the book. The conservative and libertarian enemies of liberalism have squandered so much wealth and welfare, blighted so many lives, that it is always satisfying to see them intellectually routed yet again. Unfortunately, Wolfe does not stop there. He sees liberalism's enemies, or unreliable friends, everywhere and feels bound to scold them all. Wolfe's spiritual home is *The New Republic*, and he manifests the same complacent centrism as most of its regular writers (though not—for better and worse—the snarky wit and verbal edge that make the magazine at once irresistible and insufferable). Half *The Future of Liberalism* is valuable affirmation; the other half is an ideological Syllabus of Errors.

The first and most dangerous heresy that Wolfe rebukes from the pulpit—"the single most influential illiberal current of our time"—is evolutionary psychology. The attempt to view human behavior in Darwinian perspective amounts to "nothing short of a determined campaign to reduce human beings and their accomplishments to insignificance." According to these anti-humanists, humans "rarely accomplish very much independent of what nature has bequeathed to them"; culture is a "side effect," a "by-product," just "one more way in which nature imposes its designs upon us." All this, Wolfe protests, radically undermines liberal morale. Liberalism is about choice and purpose, but the aim of evolutionary psychology "is to show that leading any kind of life we think we are choosing is impossible."

If science really and truly discredited liberalism, then the only honest response would be: so much the worse for liberalism. But, of course, it does not. The distinction between nature and culture that Wolfe brandishes so menacingly is far more subtle and tenuous than he recognizes. His version, like the obsolete distinction between body and soul, implies that we cannot be both purely physical and meaningfully moral. And yet we are. Whatever "free will" means, it does not mean that choices are uncaused. Someday our descendants will emerge from the metaphysical mists, shaking their heads and wondering what all that philosophical fuss was about. Meanwhile, as Wolfe acknowledges, a majority of sociobiologists and evolutionary psychologists are liberals who believe that "it is wrong…to confuse a scientific theory such as evolutionary psychology with a moral and political agenda." Wolfe thinks he knows better. I cannot understand why.

Easier to understand, even if no more persuasive, is Wolfe's antipathy to the "new atheists," that quartet of scoffing skeptics: Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. Though not overtly religious, Wolfe is a fellow traveler. He recalls liberalism's debts to John Locke and John Leland, the Social Gospel movement and the civil rights movement. He repudiates fundamentalism but also complains that many contemporary believers feel beleaguered. "Nonbelief has historically taken both liberal and illiberal forms, and…much of the resurgence of atheism we have been witnessing in recent years belongs in the latter category."

It is, Bishop Wolfe admonishes these nonbelieving zealots, "a cornerstone of the liberal sensibility to extend rights to those who hold ideas with which you disagree." Well, yes. Don't Hitchens and Harris agree that citizens of a liberal democracy have a right to their beliefs? According to Wolfe, Hitchens "just barely" agrees, and Harris "not at all." They are "intolerant," "closed-minded" and do not believe in "the free exchange of ideas."

As anyone who has read Hitchens's *God Is Not Great* and Harris's *The End of Faith*

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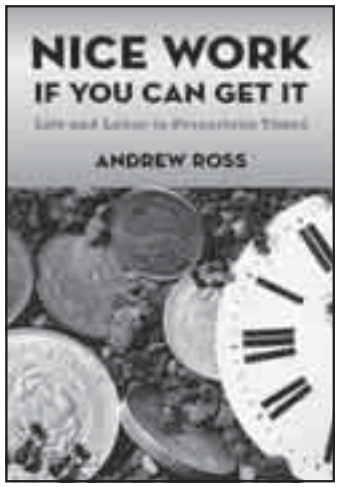

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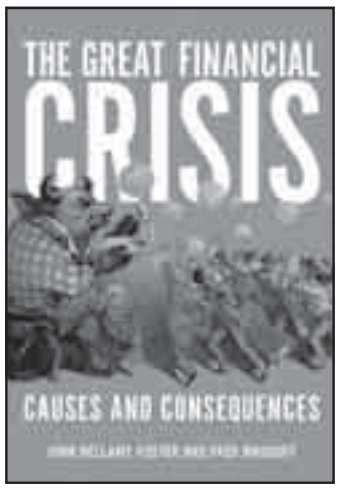

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The Branches

The branches looked first like tepees,
but there was no emptiness.

Like piles of leaves waiting for fire:
at the foot of the wisewoman trees,
at the foot of the broken General,

next to the tree of the veteran
girl who died this summer slow red
cloth

Red Cloth

Red cloth
I lie on the ground
otherwise nothing could hold

I put my hand on the ground
the membrane is gone
and nothing does hold

your place in the ground
is all of it
and it is breathing

JEAN VALENTINE

knows, Wolfe cannot mean this, and he does not. What he means is that they do not show their allegedly benighted fellow-citizens sufficient respect. They raise their voices, make fun, jeer. This may be unwise; it is certainly uncharitable. But there is nothing illiberal about it. Liberal equality means (or will mean, if we ever get there) that we all have a chance to be heard during the discussion and all have one vote at the end. To be impatient with superstitious nonsense violates no one's rights—though if Hitchens and Harris are listening, I would recommend a *little* more patience.

A Tolerable Anarchy is a kinder, gentler book, anxious and wistful where *The Future of Liberalism* is magisterially self-assured and smugly condescending. Jedediah Purdy, who introduced himself to the world a decade ago with *For Common Things: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today*, is preoccupied with "the divorce of civic identity from government": the displacement of public virtue by personal virtue in American political life and language. The delicate, shifting interplay between public and private, individual and community, freedom and obligation, in our political rhetoric is, for Purdy, the best index of the condition of liberalism.

A "tolerable" anarchy was Edmund Burke's bemused but approving description of American freedom in its earliest incarnation. Unlike that hidebound Tory Samuel Johnson, Burke thought the new polity struck a sensible balance between propertied authority and democratic equality. (Many debt-burdened Revolutionary War veterans, like Daniel Shays, came to disagree.) Johnson was scathing about the hypocrisy of slaveowners' insistence on their rights and liberties, but Burke shrewdly saw that slavery was an essential part of the American "sensation of freedom," because it furnished a defining contrast.

In Purdy's telling, the prestige of individualism waxed during America's nineteenth century, notably in the writings of Emerson, Frederick Douglass and Walt Whitman. In their expansive conception, habit and tradition—any impediments to forging and asserting one's uniqueness—were a kind of slavery. But then came the chief watershed in the history of American freedom: mass production. Economic self-sufficiency, the old basis of American individualism, vanished into our heroic past. Dependence on large, impersonal economic arrangements became the rule, as business and the state beat back efforts by Populists and the labor movement to regain a modest autonomy.

Woodrow Wilson, according to Purdy, was the first president to reckon with these momentous changes. Wilson "turned from old images of Americans as self-reliant pioneers and entrepreneurs to a new acknowledgment that personal fate depended on vast and impersonal forces, which could willy-nilly crush or elevate a vulnerable individual." In this new environment, only the national government could tame these forces and enable individual Americans to achieve meaningful freedom. Business again beat back the challenge, stymieing Wilsonian Progressivism. But two decades later, economic collapse called forth similar language from Franklin Roosevelt, who decried our "highly centralized economic system" as "the despot of the twentieth century" and promised that government would help solve the "ever-rising problems of a complex civilization." Governmental support would "not hamper individualism but protect it."

This language of government/citizen partnership persisted for several decades, Purdy claims, until Ronald Reagan's "brilliant recasting" of partnership as paternalism. Reagan simply denied that "complex, impersonal systems" often "outstripped individual will and understanding." The essential conditions of social and economic life had not changed, he insisted; Americans could master them, as always, by "common sense and free choice" if government only got out of the way. This adroit rhetorical reversal set the tone for his successors. Clinton reluctantly and Bush II enthusiastically agreed that government intervention eroded individual autonomy—or, turning Roosevelt on his head, did not protect individualism but hampered it.

This rapid survey does less than justice to Purdy's lovingly nuanced account of American political rhetoric. But perhaps Purdy does American political rhetoric more than justice. They're only words, after all. If you want to know what Reagan really stood for, read William Kleinknecht's *The Man Who Sold the World*, which traces Reagan's "infusion of commercial values into every sphere of American life." If you want to know where he came from, read Kim Phillips-Fein's *Invisible Hands*, which shows how a few "business crusaders," inflamed opponents of the New Deal, recruited, tutored and financed the feather-headed film star. To assess Reagan's legacy, pore over his works, not only the words of his first inaugural address, as Purdy does.

In fact, Purdy's near-exclusive focus on language sometimes has the effect—as with his attempt to fit the Iraq War into his story

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MEMORIAL SERVICE
Philip Agee
1935 - 2008

Sunday, May 3, 2009
12 noon
Marjorie S. Deane
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Bernie Dwyer's 2007 film of
Philip's last interview will be shown.
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line—of raising serious doubts about his grasp of reality. He writes, for example:

> Confident in their humane motives, the president and his more idealistic advisers scarcely considered the inhumane effects their acts might have: the heart, astonishingly, seemed to be enough. Trusting that what seemed clear to them must be equally clear to others, the war's supporters imagined themselves in a concert of freedom-promoting motives with Iraqis, an illusion that took months of growing chaos to unravel. Above all, the architects of the occupation were indifferent to the basic institutions of order, allowing the tasks of government to slip through their fingers. They waited for freedom to arise while squandering its preconditions.

Unlike Wolfe's pedestrian prose style, Purdy's has rhythm and lilt. A graceful style can cover only so many sins, though. His précis of the Iraq War is piffle from beginning to end. The invasion of Iraq was initially portrayed as a response to threats to American security. When these were exposed as nonexistent (indeed, fabricated), a new marketing strategy, "democracy promotion," was devised by the government and eagerly swallowed by a docile intelligentsia. Meanwhile, the occupying forces moved immediately to accomplish the invasion's real goals: construction of permanent bases for future Middle East military interventions, exploitation of Iraq's energy resources and conversion of the country into a wholly unregulated investors' paradise. It was a perfectly plausible, entirely coldblooded imperialist project, though unexpectedly it failed. There were no "humane" or "freedom-promoting" motives, no "idealistic" advisers, no "indifference to the basic institutions of order"—the order they really intended to create.

Liberalism has an honorable past, as Wolfe and Purdy are right to remind us. Its future must be more of the same—much more than either Wolfe or Purdy seems willing to advocate. Liberalism has always stood, at least in theory, for government accountability and citizen participation, for broadly based prosperity and the absence of class hierarchy, for social solidarity and against exploitation, domestic or international. It has always, that is, been proto-socialist. It needs to affirm those values far more explicitly and emphatically, even if the word "socialism"—the victim of history's greatest terminological hijacking—is never heard again.

The problem with socialism—the real kind, not the totalitarian travesty—is, as everyone knows, that it would take too many evenings. The problem with contemporary liberalism is that it takes too few. How many Americans meet regularly with neighbors or co-workers to formulate questions or instructions for their elected representatives or evaluate their performance; to hear experts, activists, or officials criticize or defend government or corporate policy; to share information or discuss strategy with fellow citizens in other neighborhoods or workplaces? A nationwide participatory political culture has been perfectly feasible since radio was invented. With current technology—at least until the Internet is privatized and community cable TV is defunded—it's a piece of cake. Yes, it can be tedious. But if we don't meet before this or that local or national institution breaks down or crisis develops, we'll just wind up having to meet afterward, in far less pleasant circumstances.

Eternal involvement is the price of democracy. Refuse to pay the price and you wind up with the catastrophe of Reagan/Gingrich/Bushism: the world's richest, freest country turned into a decaying, plutocratic, militarized rogue state. Marx warned that our alternatives were socialism or barbarism. Since we've agreed not to use the s-word, let's just say that our alternatives are a democratically energized liberalism or a banana republic. ■

Rockabilly Blues

Rock.
Rock.
Rockabilly, rock.
Really Billy, really, really rock.
Shake your silly hillbilly flock.
Sing the Pledge of Allegiance.
Sing all the dire anthems
of the coming apocalypse.
Sing the burning bush.
Sing the Wall St. blues
& bow down before
the bedonkadonk
of Britney or the Brits
at old Bunker Hill.
It's all good…
It's all Davy Crockett.

ADRIAN C. LOUIS

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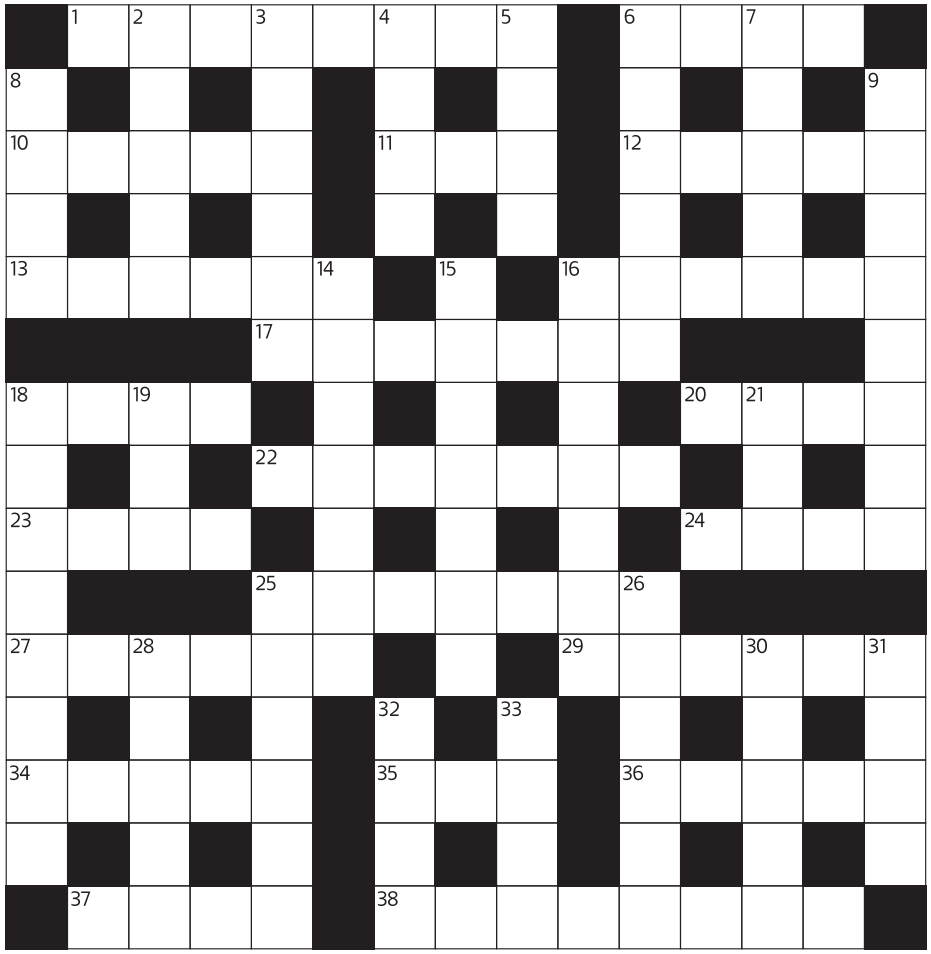

ACROSS

1 and **6** Flying time for such as 18 across, possibly. (8,4)

10 See 5 down

11 See 37

12 A word of apology. (5)

13 Say something you've learned by heart. (6)

16 Puts one in the office, hopefully for the better. (6)

17 Letter in fancy style? (7)

18 Could create a gash to be found in 1 and 6 across. (4)

20 Like how a potential draftee doesn't want to be placed in the continent. (4)

22 Works hard to get by, as half of 8 goes right on the little devils! (7)

23 Exploding star, which such as painters follow when they are fine. (4)

24 An added word or so, right to the point, where the choir finishes. (4)

25 Novelist, sort of red on the rise. (7)

27 Make an objection to the point reserved. (6)

29 Having ever so much affection, like Rin Tin Tin around his middle name. (6)

34 The music manuscript must be famous. (5)

37, **35**, **11** and **36** What they are supposed to deserve is certainly equitable! (4,3,3,5)

38 Put up with what some do for the office—the sort which is wrong, and loud inside. (5,3)

DOWN

2 Abraham's son, or Mr. Newton. (5)

3 Prairie wolf—sort of shy on a broken digit. (6)

4 This nation is a sort without an example of how 2 goes with 4 twice. (4)

5 and **10** across Behaves unpredictably—like egos, for example. (4,5)

6 A total pain, as they say, but rather hearty around the boat. (6)

7 Hungarian, for example. (5)

8 What you might have to show later, when cars are wrecked. (4)

9 What one wears to keep the light from being a bother looks like hell—pointless! (3-5)

14 One who has a refined taste for pie, sort of, to make things better. (7)

15 Hoping endlessly for an early wonder drug. (7)

16 How time passed by, when sort of pleased by it. (7)

18 Accumulating for preservation a billboard in London, for instance. (8)

19 and **21** Obtain a meal, as one may do reluctantly in the morning. (4,2)

25 One who does all the dirty work. (6)

26 What we was, according to the poor loser. (6)

28 An adopted maxim is all the word in Paris, to the very end. (5)

30 The princess of light opera gets what might follow land, or westward—in state. (5)

31 What the singing group should be filled with, if very happy? (4)

32 Goes out this way. (4)

33 Possibly neat example of a big blow-hard. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3167

R	H	O	D	E	I	S	L	A	N	D	R	E	D	
I		A		M		A		P		R		N		O
N	U	R	S	E	R	Y		P	R	O	D	D	E	D
G		L		N		S		L		L		O		O
S	W	O	R	D	S		W	A	L	L	O	W	E	R
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	C	R	O	C	O	D	I	L	E	T	E	A	R	S

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Breaking Research News

Life is short...or maybe not.

Top Harvard researcher says it's "the Holy Grail of aging research."*

...as seen on CBS "60 Minutes"

Don't wait for the drug companies to drive the price through the roof; get the benefits of this breakthrough *natural* extract for pennies a day!

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At this moment, drug companies are rushing to create prescription drugs that mimic the awesome health benefits of this simple natural extract. A leading pharmaceutical company has already spent $760,000,000 on purchasing the research and development.

The powerful secret of tomorrow's anti-aging pill can be yours today.

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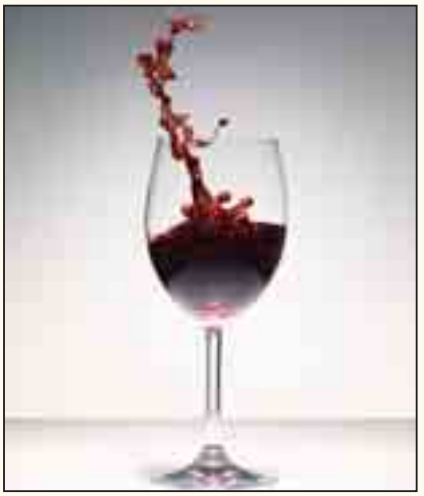
But don't try to drink yourself healthy, because it would take **50 bottles day**! Now there is a way to take resveratrol without the alcohol, calories and high cost. Vinotrol™, with 50mg of resveratrol derived from grapes and roots, provides the equivalent of the resveratrol in **278 five ounce glasses of Pinot Noir.**



"We have something (resveratrol) that **extends the life of every species** it's (been) given to. We're 50 years ahead of where I'd thought we would be 10 years ago," said a leading professor of pathology at Harvard Medical School, reported by the *NY Times*.

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Harvard Medical School, Johns Hopkins, Salk Institute and UC Davis Medical Research Proves That Powerful Red Wine Extract Holds the Secret to Living a Longer, Healthier and More Vibrant Life

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It's time to make the world a safer place to drive. That's Allstate's Stand.

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